WORLDS OF TOMORROW

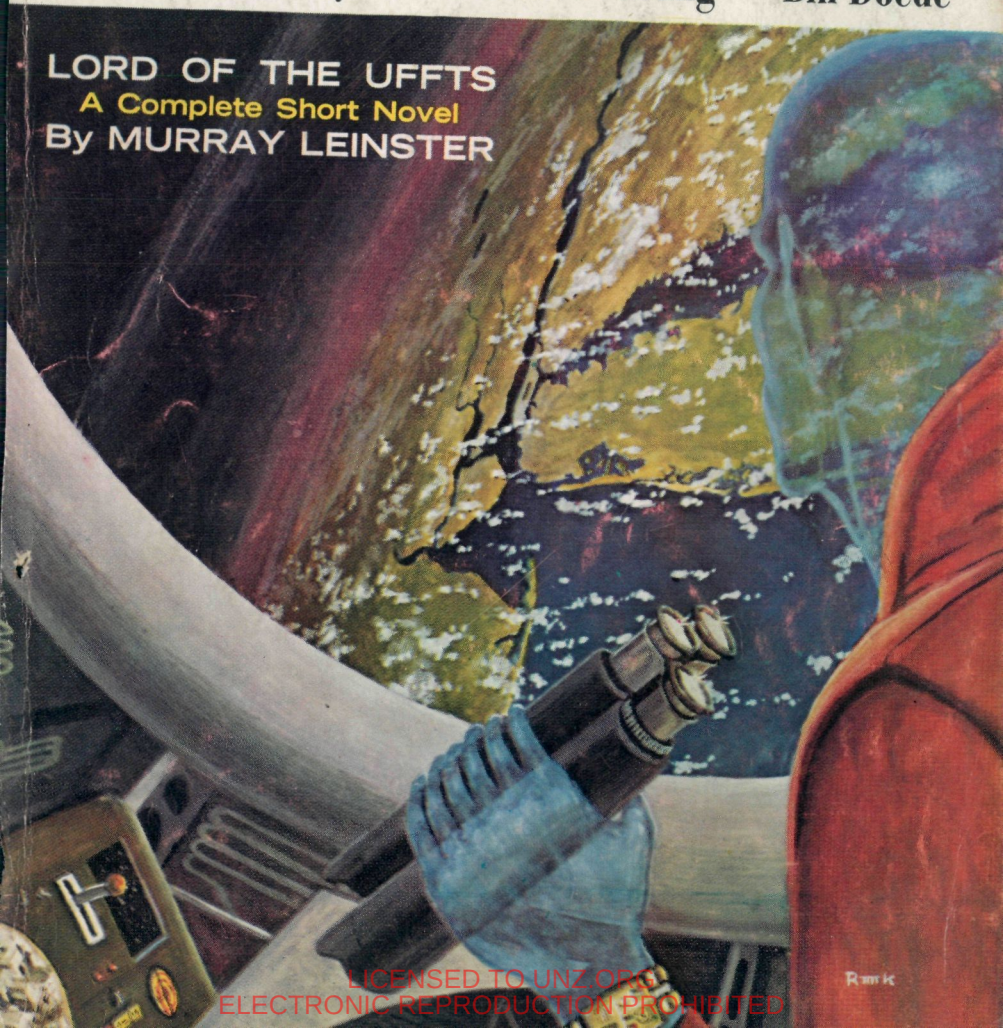
FEBRUARY 1964
50c

THE TRANSCENDENT TIGERS
R. A. Lafferty

LITTLE DOG GONE
Robert F. Young

ALPHA, BETA, LOVE...
Bill Doede

LORD OF THE UFFTS
A Complete Short Novel
By MURRAY LEINSTER



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MONEY-SAVING SUBSCRIPTION OFFER ON

WORLDS OF TOMORROW

SCIENCE FICTION'S NEWEST ALL-STAR MAGAZINE

You don't have to mail the coupon — if you want to keep your covers intact — but don't delay! Send in today for your INTRODUCTORY SUBSCRIPTION to *Worlds of Tomorrow*, science fiction's first ALL-NEW magazine in years . . . and sure to be one of its best! Every issue of *Worlds of Tomorrow* is packed with the best stories of your favorite writers. At this special INTRODUCTORY PRICE you get THIRTEEN issues for only $4.50 — saving you almost one-third of newsstand price — more than three-quarters of a million words of outstanding stories. Either clip the coupon or send order on a plain sheet of paper . . . but don't wait! Do it today!

WORLDS OF TOMORROW
Introductory Subscription Department
421 Hudson Street, New York City 14, New York

Yes, send me WORLDS OF TOMORROW at your special introductory price! Start my subscription with Issue No. 1 - No. 2 (circle which you prefer). I enclose check or money order for $4.50. (Add $1.00 for postage outside of North and South America).

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ Zone____ State_____

Here's What Is in Store for You in
WORLDS OF TOMORROW

KEITH LAUMER —
You'll laugh with his *The Star-Sent Knaves* and be enthralled by his *The Night of the Trolls.*

JUDITH MERRIL —
One of science fiction's finest women writers and anthologists brings you her unforgettable story, *The Lonely.*

JACK WILLIAMSON —
An all-time great writer with *The Masked World.*

DAMON KNIGHT —
Celebrated author of *The Visitor at the Zoo* comes to WORLDS OF TOMORROW with *The End of the Search.*

BRIAN W. ALDISS —
Hugo award-winner with an unforgettable novelette, *The Impossible Star.*

DANIEL KEYES —
Another Hugo winner with another memorable novelette, *A Jury of Its Peers.*

All Your Favorites!
Prize winners and the best of the newcomers, novelists and short-story writers — all the writers who bring you the best of science fiction will be with you in WORLDS OF TOMORROW. Don't wait! Send in your subscription today!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FEB 13 ENTD D

WORLDS OF TOMORROW®

FEBRUARY 1964

Vol. 1 No. 6

ALL NEW STORIES

FREDERIK POHL
Editor

SOL COHEN
Publisher

DAVID PERTON
Production Manager

JOHN ASSANTE
Art Director

DAVE GELLER ASSOC
Advertising

Cover by McKENNA from WHEN THE STARS ANSWER

CONTENTS

COMPLETE SHORT NOVEL

LORD OF THE UFFTS 8
by Murray Leinster

NOVELETTES

ALPHA, BETA, LOVE 96
by Bill Doede

LITTLE DOG GONE 134
by Robert F. Young

SHORT STORIES

WHEN THE STARS ANSWER 115
by T. K. Brown III

THE TRANSCENDENT TIGERS 125
by R. A. Lafferty

SPECIAL ARTICLES

THE PROVENANCE OF SWIFT 88
by Lyle G. Boyd
We know that no Martian has ever passed as a man on the Earth. Question is, do the Martians know it?

A MESSAGE FROM LOKI 121
by James Blish

FEATURES

Editorial 4
by Frederik Pohl

COMING . . . TOMORROW! 124

WORLDS OF TOMORROW is published bi-monthly by GALAXY PUBLISHING CORP. Main Offices: 421 Hudson Street, New York 14, N.Y. 50c per copy. Subscription: (6 copies) $2.50 per year in the United States, Canada, Mexico, South and Central America and U. S. Possessions. Elsewhere $3.50. Application for second class entry pending at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Copyright, New York 1964, by Galaxy Publishing Corp. Robert M. Guinn, President. All rights, including translations reserved. All material submitted must be accompanied by self-addressed stamped envelopes. The publisher assumes no responsibility for unsolicited material. All stories printed in this magazine are fiction, and any similarity between characters and actual persons is coincidental. Printed in the U.S.A. By The Guinn Co., Inc., N.Y. Title Reg. U.S. Pat. Off.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Reading and Writing

Here's a science-fiction story without an ending. If you can't supply the ending you can glance ahead to page 7; but it's more fun if you figure it out yourself. The story:

The Arcturan spy slithered into the air lock of his radar-proofed shelter on the far side of the Moon, casting one tentacled eye over his shoulder to see if he had been followed. He dumped a canister the size of a pack of cigarettes onto laboratory bench and crowed to his Betelgeusan ally: "I've got it! The terrestrial secret weapon! Throw it in the freezer, quick!"

The Betelgeusan nodded two heads, glanced at the instructions on the can, placed it in the refrigeration device and began to set his dials. The Arcturan exulted: "The Ultimate Secret Weapon! The most powerful chemical explosive ever known! The bomb that those vile humans have used to harry us from star to star . . . say, what the Cosmos is bugging you?"

The Betelgeusan had turned lavender with perplexity. He stammered: "How cold must it be kept?"

"Idiot! It says on the label, store at minus forty degrees. Use the conversion tables, and hurry up about it, because if it gets too cold or too hot — " He pantomimed the sort of vast inferno that had annihilated their stronghold on Titan.

"*Which* minus forty? They had so many scales! Fahrenheit? Centigrade? Absolute?"

The Arcturan trembled. "Why—let's see, I stole it in New South Wales. Quick, look it up in the Britannica and see what scale they use there . . . and *hurry*!"

But all the "N" pages had been chewed out of their Britannica by the Sirian janitor, termitelike form of insatiable appetite. They radioed at once to their orbiting supply ship for instructions. But it was fifteen light-minutes away, and by the time the answer got back they were only a rosy glow in a brand-new crater.

Of course, they didn't really need

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

any instructions; they could have figured out the proper temperature for themselves.

How?

* * *

While you're figuring that out we'll change the subject. A good subject to change to is some interesting new books, like for instance Harlow Shapley's *The View from a Distant Star* (Basic Books), which we've just finished reading. What Shapley means to imply when he gives his book that title is the sort of objective, giftie-gie'n power to look at mankind from outside that is characteristic of some of the best kinds of science fiction.

Shapley, of course, is not a science-fiction writer. He is one of the hardest of hard scientists, the man who located Sol's position in the galaxy of stars, who helped devise the cepheid-variable method of measuring stellar distances, who—well, the list is endless. All the same, he thinks like a science-fiction writer.

In *The View from a Distant Star* Shapley takes a long, hard look at the past, the present and the future. None of them scare him. He is not afraid to make an unequivocal prediction ("A world-state is in prospect for the very near future.") or to fix a time limit (within 250 years, or, as he puts it, "before the planet Pluto . . . has completed its present circuit around the sun.") He is willing to admit limitations—both his own and his species'—and not above taking cognizance of practical considerations from time to time. (Did you know that to discover a new variable star costs about $8 in labor costs? Galaxies come in at $52 a hundred—though it is hoped that automation will soon knock four dollars off the price.) In short, what Harlow Shapley's book is, is pleasant, persuasive and rewarding reading.

* * *

So, in somewhat different ways, is Willy Ley's new *Watchers of the Skies* (Viking). All of us know Willy Ley well by now (especially if we read *Worlds of Tomorrow's* companion magazine, *Galaxy*, which his column, *For Your Information*, has adorned since the magazine began.) What Ley offers us here is described as "an informal history of astronomy from Babylon to the Space Age," and it is indeed all of that. From Nebuchadnezzar to Project Ozma, he tells us not only what happened and who did it, but what they were thinking, where they were in error and how the errors occurred. He takes time to explore some of the pseudo-history of astronomy, too—the legend of the "pyramid inch," which in its fullest flowering proves that the ancient Egyptians knew far more than they possibly could have known about terrestrial and solar measurements. (As Ley says, "the pyramid's original height . . . was 1/270,000 of the circumference of the earth. The only possible answer is 'why not?' . . . I just 'discovered' that the wingspan of the Boeing 720 Jet passenger liner is one millionth of the equatorial circumference of the earth.")

* * *

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Then there is Ashley Montagu's *Human Heredity* (Signet), which is in a new edition so considerably expanded and updated that it might as well be a new book. (After all, the first edition is now three years old—practically forever, at the present pace of research in genetics and its biochemistry.) It would have seemed impossible to us to believe that anyone could explain to a layman (such as ourselves) just what the dickens they're doing with DNA and RNA and all the assorted genetic chemicals that keep cropping in *Scientific American,* and probably it would have been impossible for anyone else. Montagu makes it look easy. He not only gets in a greater density of fact to the printed page than you would have believed yourself capable of assimilating, he makes it pleasant in the process. (And while he's doing it throws in all sorts of odds and ends of other information out of what is clearly a limitless erudition. Did you know, for example, that tattooer's inks do not include a blue? The frequent blue color you see is made of black ink, refracted through the flesh.)

* * *

There are three stimulating books. They have something else in common, by the way. Harlow Shapley was for years associated with the Harvard Observatory, and so was one of the contributors to this issue of *Worlds of Tomorrow*. Willy Ley devotes some of his attention in *Watchers of the Skies* to Jonathan Swift's remarkable "guess" about the moons of Mars, and that is the subject of the article beginning on page 88 of this issue. In Ashley Montagu's brilliantly lucid section on the hereditary factors involved in "tasting"—that is, the ability to taste the chemical phenylthiocarbamide—he draws on field studies made by one of our contributors for his data on this trait in Tiflis, Moscow and Cairo.

The same contributor is involved in each case, and her name is Lyle Boyd. (She was the "ell" in the joint pen-name "Boyd Ellanbee," the "bee" being her husband Bill Boyd, under which name quite a few good science-fiction stories were published a few years ago.) When not writing science-fiction, blood-typing Egyptian mummies or handing out cups of phenylthiocarbamide to Navajos, Mrs. Boyd writes on scientific and semi-scientific themes.

The present article—is it fact or fiction?

Well . . . we'll leave that up to you to decide!

* * *

Oh, yes, the Arcturan spy. What he didn't realize is that minus forty degrees is a unique case. In all three scales it is unambiguous—on the Absolute scale, because of course there is no such temperature reading as forty degrees below zero Absolute; unambiguous in Centigrade and Fahrenheit, because it is the reading at which they coincide. (To transform Centigrade into Fahrenheit, divide the temperature by five, multiply by nine and add 32.)

You figured it out yourself, of course. After all, we humans are a lot smarter than Arcturan spies!

—THE EDITOR

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

These great minds were Rosicrucians...

WHAT SECRET POWER DID THEY POSSESS?

Benjamin Franklin

Isaac Newton

Francis Bacon

Why were these men great?

How does anyone — man or woman — achieve greatness? Is it not by mastery of the powers within ourselves?

Know the mysterious world within you! Attune yourself to the wisdom of the ages! Grasp the inner power of your mind! Learn the secrets of a full and peaceful life!

Benjamin Franklin, statesman and inventor... Isaac Newton, discoverer of the Law of Gravitation ... Francis Bacon, philosopher and scientist ... like many other learned and great men and women ... were Rosicrucians. The Rosicrucians (NOT a religious organization) have been in existence for centuries. Today, headquarters of the Rosicrucians send over seven million pieces of mail annually to all parts of the world.

The ROSICRUCIANS

San Jose (AMORC) California, U.S.A.

THIS BOOK FREE!

Write for your FREE copy of "The Mastery of Life" — TODAY. No obligation. A non-profit organization. Address: Scribe L.E.W.

SEND THIS COUPON

Scribe L.E.W.
The ROSICRUCIANS
(AMORC)
San Jose, California, U.S.A.

Please send me the *free* book, *The Mastery of Life*, which explains how I may learn to use my faculties and powers of mind.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____

State_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LORD of the UFFTS

BY MURRAY LEINSTER

Illustrated by GIUNTA

On the world of the uffts, men had as much of everything as they could possibly desire — which, of course, made them utterly, grindingly poor!

I

It occurred to Link Denham, as a matter for mild regret, that he was about to wake up, and he'd had much too satisfactory a previous evening to want to do so. He lay between sleeping and awake, and he felt a splendid peacefulness, and the festive events in which he'd relaxed after six months on Glaeth ran pleasantly through his mind.

He didn't want to think about Glaeth any more. He'd ventured forth for a large evening because he wanted to forget that man-killing world. Now, not fully asleep and very far from wide awake, snatches of charming memory floated through his consciousness. There had

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been song, this past evening. There had been conversation — man-talk upon matters of great interest and no importance whatever. And things had gone on to a remarkably enjoyable climax.

He did not stir, but he remembered that one of his new-found intimate friends had been threatened with ejection from the place where Link and others relaxed. There were protests, in which Link joined. Then there was conflict, in which he took part. The intended ejectee was rescued before he was heaved into the darkness outside this particular space-port joint. There was celebration of his rescue. Then the space-port cops arrived, which was an insult to all the warm friends who now considered that they had been celebrating together.

Link drowsily and pleasurably recalled the uproar. There were many pleasing items it was delightful to review. Somebody had defied fate and chance and space-port cops from a pyramid of piled-up chairs and tables. Link himself, with many loyal comrades, had charged the cops who tried to pull him down. He recalled bottles spinning in the air, spouting their contents as they flew. Space-port cops turned fire-hoses on Link's new friends, and they and he heaved chairs at spaceport cops. Some friends fought cordially on the floor and others zestfully at other places, and all the tensions and all the tautness of nerves developed on Glaeth — where the death-rate was ten per cent a month among carynth-hunters — were relieved and smoothed out and totally erased So Link now felt completely peaceful and beatifically content.

Somewhere, something mechanical clicked loudly. Something else made a subdued grunting noise which was also mechanical. These sounds were reality, intruding upon the blissful tranquility Link now enjoyed.

He remembered something. His eyes did not open, but his hand fumbled at his waist. He was reassured.

His stake-belt was still there, and it still contained the gritty small objects for which he'd risked his life several times a day for some months in succession. Those pinkish crystals were at once the reason and the reward for his journey to Glaeth. He'd been lucky. But he'd become intolerably tense. He'd been unable to relax when the buy-boat picked him up with other carynth-hunters, and he hadn't been able to loosen up his nerves at the planet to which the buy-boat took him. But here, on this remoter planet Trent, he had relaxed at last. He was soothed. He was prepared to face reality with a cheerful confidence.

Remembering, he had become nearly awake. It occurred to him that the laws of the planet Trent were said to be severe. The cops were s t e r n. It was highly probable that when he opened his eyes he would find himself in jail, with fines to be paid and a magistrate's lecture on proper behavior to be listened to. But he recalled unworriedly that he could pay his fines, and that he was ready to behave like an angel — now that he'd relaxed.

The loud clicking sound repeated.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It was followed again by the grunting noise. Link opened his eyes.

Something that looked like a wall turned slowly around some six feet away from him. A moment later he found himself regarding a corner where three walls came together.

He hadn't moved his head. The wall had moved. Again, later, a square and more or less flat object with a billowing red cloth on it floated into view. He deduced that it was a table.

He was not standing on his feet, however. He was not lying on a bunk. He floated, weightless, in mid-air, in a cubicle perhaps ten feet by fifteen and seven feet high. The thing with the red cloth on it was truly a table, fastened to what ought to be a floor. There were chairs. There was a doorway with steps leading nowhere.

Link closed his eyes and counted ten, but the look of things remained the same when he reopened them.

Before his relaxation of the night before, such a waking would have disturbed him. Now he contemplated his surroundings with calm. He was evidently not in jail. As evidently, he was not aground anywhere. The only possible explanation was unlikely to the point of insanity, but it had to be true. He was in a spaceship, and not a luxurious one. This particular compartment was definitely shabby. And on the evidence of no-gravity, the ship was in free fall.

It was not exactly a normal state of things to wake up to.

There came again a loud clicking, followed by another subdued mechanical grunt. Link made a guess at the origin of the sounds. It was most likely a pressure-reduction valve, releasing air from a high-pressure tank to maintain a lower pressure some where else. If Link had taken thought, his hair would have stood on end immediately. But he didn't.

The cubicle, moving sedately around him, brought one of its walls within reach of his foot. He kicked. He floated away from the ceiling to a gentle impact on the floor. He held on, more or less, by using the palms of his hands as suction-cups — a most unsatisfactory system — and got within reach of a table-leg. He swung himself about and shoved for the doorway. He floated to it in slow motion, caught hold of a stair-tread, got a grip on the door frame, and oriented himself with respect to the room.

He was in the mess-room of a certainly ancient and obviously small ship of space.

All was shabbiness. Where paint had not peeled off, it stayed on in blisters. The flooring was worn through to the metal plates beneath. There were other signs of neglect. There had been no tidying of this mess-room for a long time.

He heard a faint, new, rumbling sound. It stopped, and came again. It was overhead, in the direction the stairway led to. The rumbling came once more. It was rhythmic.

Link grasped a hand-rail and heaved himself gently upward. He arrived at a landing, and the rumbling noise was louder. This level of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the ship contained cabins for the crew. The rumbling came from a higher level still. He went up more steps, floating as before.

He arrived at a control-room which was antiquated and grubby and of very doubtful efficiency. There were ports, which were covered with frost.

Somebody snored above his head. That was the rumbling sound. Link lifted his eyes and saw the snorer.

A small, whiskery man scowled portentuously even in his sleep. He floated in mid-air as Link had floated, but with his knees drawn up and his two hands beside his cheek as if resting on an imaginary pillow. And he snored.

Link reflected, and then said genially:

"Hello!"

The whiskery man snored again. Link saw something familiar about him. Yes. He'd been involved in the festivity of the night before. Link remembered having seen him scowling ferociously from the sidelines while tumult raged and fire-hoses played.

"Ship ahoy!" said Link loudly.

The small man jumped, in the very middle of a snore. He choked and blinked and made astonished movements, and of course began to turn eccentric half-circles in mid-air. In one of his turnings he saw Link. He said peevishly:

"Dammit, don't stand there starin'! Get me down! — But don't turn on the gravity! Want me to break my neck?"

Link reached up and caught a foot. He brought the little man down to solidity and released him.

"Huh," said the little man waspishly. "You're awake."

"Apparently," admitted Link. "Are you?"

The little man snorted. He aligned himself and gave a shove. He floated through the air to the control board. He caught its corner. He looked it over and pushed a button. Ship's gravity came on. There was a sudden slight jolt, and then a series of lesser jolts, and then the fine normal feeling of gravity and weight, and up and down. Things abruptly looked more sensible. They weren't, but they looked that way.

"I'm curious," said Link. "Have you any idea where we are?"

The whiskery man said scornfully. "Where we are? How'd I know? That's your business!"

His air grew truculent as Link didn't grasp the idea.

"My business?"

"You're the astrogator, ain't you? You signed on last night — I had to help you hold the pen, but you signed on! Astrogator, third officer's ticket, and you said you could astrogate a wash-bucket from Sirius Three to the Rim with nothin' but a foot-rule and a logarithm table. That's what you said! You said you'd astrogated a Norse space-liner six hundred light-years tail-first to port after her over-drive unit switched poles. You said."

Link held up his head.

"I — er — I recognize the imaginative style," he said painfully. "But how did that land me — wherever I am?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"You made a deal with me," said the little man, truculently. "Thistlethwaite's the name. You signed on this ship, the *Glamorgan*, an' you said you were an astrogator and I made the deal on that representation. It's four years in jail, on Trent, to sign up or act as an astrogator unless you're duly licensed!"

"Morbid people, the law-makers of Trent," said Link. "What else?"

"You don't draw wages," said the whiskery man, as truculently as before. "You're a junior partner in the business I'm startin'. You agreed to leave all matters but astrogation to me, on penalty of forfeitin' all moneys due or accrued or to accrue. It's a tight contract. I wrote it myself."

"I am lost in admiration," said Link politely. "But —"

"We're goin'," said Thistlethwaite sternly, "to a planet I know. Another fella and me, we landed there in a space-boat after the ship we was in got wrecked. We made a deal with the — uh — authorities. We took off again in the space-boat. It was loaded down with plenty valuable cargo! We was to go back, but my partner — he was the astrogator of the space-boat — he took his share of the money and started celebratin'. Two weeks later he jumped out a window because he thought pink gryphs was coming out of the wall after him. That left me sole owner of the business, but strapped for cash. I'd been celebratin' too. So I bought the *Glamorgan*."

"A very fine ship, the *Glamorgan*," said Link politely, "But I'm a little dense this morning, or evening, or whatever it may be. How do I fit into this picture of commercial enterprise aboard this splendid ship, the *Glamorgan*?"

The whiskery man spat venomously.

"The ship's junk," he snapped. "I couldn't get papers for her to go anywheres but to a junkyard on Bellaire to be scrapped. I had a astrogator and a fella to spell me in the engine-room. They believed we was going to the junkyard, but we had some trouble with the engines layin' down, and she leaked air. Plenty! So when we got to Trent those two run off. They' liable to two years in jail for runnin' out on a contract concerning personal services. — Hell! They didn't think we'd make Trent! They wanted to take to the space-boat and abandon ship halfway there! And me with all my capital tied up in it!"

Link regarded his companion uncomfortably. Thistlethwaite snapped:

"So I was stuck on Trent with no astrogator an' port dues pilin' up. Until you came along."

"Ah!" said Link. "I came along! Riding a white horse, no doubt, and kissing my hand to the ladies. Then what?"

"I asked you if you was a astrogator, and you told me yes."

"I hate to disappoint people," said Link regretfully. "I probably wanted to brighten up your day. Or evening. I tried."

"Then," said Thistlethwaite portentuously, "I told you enough about what I'm goin' after, so you said it was a splendid venture, befittin' such

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

men as you and me. You'd join me, you said. But you wanted to fight some more policemen before liftin' off. I'd already drug you out of a fight where the spaceport cops was usin' fire-hoses on both sides. I told you fightin' policemen carries six months in jail, on Trent. But you wouldn't listen. Even after I told you why we had to take off quick."

"And that reason was—?"

"Spaceport dues," snapped the little men. "On the *Glamorgan!* Landin'-grid fees. On the *Glamorgan!* I run out of money! Besides, there was grub and some parts for the engines that's been givin' trouble. I bought 'em and charged 'em, like a businessman does, expectin' to come back some day and pay for 'em. But the spaceport people got suspicious. They were goin' to seize the ship tomorrow — today — and sell her if they could for the port-bills and grub-bills and parts-bills."

"I see!" said Link. "And I probably sympathized with you."

"You said," said the little man grimly, "that it was a conspiracy against brave an' valiant souls like us two, an' you'd only fight two more policemen — six months more on top of what you was already liable to — and then we'd defy such crass and commercial individuals and take off into the wild blue yonder."

Link reflected. He shook his head in mild disapproval.

"So what happened?"

"You fought four policemen," said his companion succinctly. "In two separate scraps, addin' a year in jail to what you'd piled up before."

"It begins to look," said Link, "as if I may have made myself unpopular on Trent. Is there anything else I ought to know?"

"They started to use teargas on you," the whiskery man told him, "so you set fire to a police truck. To let the flames lift up the gas, you said. That would be some more years in jail. But I got you in the *Glamorgan* —"

"And got the grid to lift us off?" When the little man shook his head, Link asked hopefully. "I got the grid to lift us off? . . . We persuaded —"

"Nope," said Thistlethwaite. "You just took off. On emergency rockets. Off the spaceport tarmac. With no clearance. Leavin' the oiled tarmac on fire." Link winced. The little man went on inexorably; "We hit for space at six gees acceleration and near as I can make out you kept goin' at that till the first rockets burned out. And then you went down into the mess-room —"

"I suppose," said Link unhappily, "that I'd worked up an appetite. Or was there some way I could pile up a few more years to spend in jail?"

"You went to sleep," said the little man. "And I wasn't goin' to bother you!"

Link thought it over.

"No," he agreed. "I can see that you mightn't have wanted to bother me. Do you intend to turn around and go back to Trent?"

"What for?" demanded the little man bitterly. "For jail? *An'* for them to sell off the *Glamorgan* for port-dues and such?"

"There's that, of course," ack-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nowledged Link. "But I'd rather believe you wouldn't leave a friend in distress. Or jail. All right. I don't want to go back to Trent either. I'm an outdoorsy sort of character and I wouldn't like to spend the next eighteen years in jail."

"Twenty-two," said Thistlethwaite "And six months."

"So," finished Link, "I'll play along. Since I'm the astrogator I'll try to find out where we are. Then you'll tell me where you want to go. And after that, some evening when there's nothing special to do, you'll tell me why. Right?"

"The why," snapped the whiskery man, "is I promised to make you so rich y'couldn't spend the interest on y'money! And you a junior partner!"

"Carynths," suggested Link.

Carynths were the galaxy's latest and most fabulous status gems. They couldn't be synthesized — they were said to be the result of meteoric impacts on a special peach-colored ore — and they were as beautiful as they were rare. So far they'd only been found on Glaeth. But if a woman had a carynth ring, she was somebody. If she had a carynth bracelet, she was Somebody. And if she had a carynth necklace, she ruled society on the planet on which she lived.

"Carynths are garbage," said Thistlethwaite contemptuously, "alongside of what's waitin' for us! For each one of what I'm tradin' for, to bring it away from where we goin', I'll get a hundred million credits an' half the profits after that! An' I'll have a shipload of 'em! And it's all set! Now you do your stuff and I'll check over the engines."

He headed down the stairwell. He reached the first landing below. The second. Link heard a faint click and then a mechanical grunting noise. At the sound, the little man howled enragedly. Link jumped.

"What's the matter?" he asked anxiously.

"We're leakin' air!" roared the little man. "Bleedin' it! You musta' started some places, takin' off at six gees! All the air's pourin' out!"

His words became unintelligible, but they were definitely profane. Doors clanged shut, cutting off his voice. He was sealing all compartments.

II

Link surveyed the control-room of the ship.

In his younger days he'd aspired to be a spaceman. He'd been a cadet in the Merchant Space Academy on Malibu for two complete terms. Then the faculty let him go. He liked novelty and excitement and on occasion tumult. The faculty didn't. His grades were all right but they heaved him out. So he knew a certain amount about astrogation — not much, but enough to keep from having to go back to Trent.

A door closed below. The little little man's voice could be heard, swearing sulfurously. He got something from somewhere and the door clanged behind him again cutting his voice once more.

Link resumed his survey. There was the control-board, reasonably easy to understand. There was the computer, simple enough for him to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

operate. There were reference books. A *Galactic Directory* for this sector. Alditch's *Practical Astrogation.* A luridly bound volume of *Space-Commerce Regulations.* The *Directory* was brand-new. The others were old and tattered volumes.

Link went carefully over the ship's log, which contained every course steered, time elapsed, and therefore distance run in parsecs and fractions of them. He could take the *Glamorgan* back to the last three ports she'd visited by reversing the recorded maneuvers. But that didn't seem enterprising.

He skimmed through the *Astrogator.* He'd be somewhere not too many millions of miles from the sun of the planet Trent. He'd take a look at the Trent listing in the *Directory,* copy out its coordinates and proper motion, check the galactic poles and zero galactic longitude by observation out the ports, and then get at the really tricky stuff when he learned the ship's destination.

He threw on the heater switch so he could see out the ports and observe the sun which shone on Trent. Instantly an infuriated bellow came up from below.

"Turn off the heat!" raged Thistlethwaite from below. "Turn it off!"

"But the ports are frosted," Link called back. "I need to see out! We need the heaters!"

"I was sittin' on one! Turn 'em off!"

A door clanged below. Link shrugged. If Thistlethwaite had to sit on a heater, the heater shouldn't be on. Delay was indicated.

He wasn't worried. The mood of tranquility and repose he'd waked with still stayed with him. Naturally! His current situation might have seemed disturbing to somebody else, but to a man who'd just left the planet Glaeth, with its strictly murderous fauna and flora and climatic conditions, to be aboard a merely leaking spaceship of creaking antiquity was restful. That it was only licensed to travel to a junkyard for scrapping seemed no cause for worry. That it was bound on a mysterious errand instead seemed interesting. With no cares whatever, Link was charmed to find himself in a situation where practically anything was more than likely to happen.

He thought restfully of not being on Glaeth. There were animals there which looked like rocks and acted like stones, until one got within reach of remarkably extensible hooked claws. There were trees which dripped a corrosive fluid on any moving creature that disturbed them. There were gigantic flying things against whom the only defense was concealment, and things which tunneled underground and made traps into which anything heavier than a rabbit would drop as the ground gave way beneath it. And there was the climate.

In the area in which the best finds of carynths had been made, there was no record of rain having ever fallen, and noon temperature in the most favorable season hovered around a hundred forty in the shade. But it was the only world on which carynths were to be found. The carynth-prospectors who landed there

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

— during the most favorable season, of course — sometimes got rich. Much more often they didn't. Only forty per cent of those set aground at the beginning of the prospecting season met the buy-boat which came for them at its close. Link had been one of that lucky minority.

Naturally he did not feel alarm on the *Glamorgan*! He'd almost gotten used to Glaeth! So he waited peacefully, until Thistlethwaite said it was all right to turn on the heaters and melt the frost off the ports.

He began to set up for astrogation. The coordinates for Trent would go into the computer, and then the coordinates for the ship's destination. The computer would figure the course between them and its length in parsecs and fractions of parsecs. One would drive on that course. One could, if it was desirable, look for possible ports of call on the way. Link took down the *Directory* to set up the first figures.

He happened to notice a certain consequence of the *Directory's* newness. It was the only un-shabby, unworn object on the ship. But even it showed a grayish, well-thumbed line on the edge of certain pages which had been often referred to. The grayishness should be a guide to the information about Trent, as the *Glamorgan's* latest port of call. Link opened the grayest page, pleased with himself for his acuteness.

But Trent wasn't listed on that page.

Trent wasn't even in that part of the book. The heading of this particular chapter of listings was, "*Non-Cluster Planets Between Huyla and Glaire.*" It described the maverick solar systems not on regular trade-routes and requiring long voyages for commercial spacecrafts if anybody was to reach them. People rarely wanted to.

Link stared. He found signs that this had been repeatedly referred to by somebody with engine oil on his fingers. One page had plainly been read and re-read and re-read. The planetary description on that page . . . The margin was darkened as if an oily thumb had held a place there while the item was gloated over.

From any normal standpoint it was not easy to understand.

"SORD" said the *Directory*. There followed the galactic coordinates to three places of decimals. "*Yel. sol type approx* 1.4 *sols mass, many faculae all times, spectrum . . .*"

The spectrum-symbols could be skipped. If one wanted to be sure that a particular sun was such-and-such, one would take a spectrophoto and compare it with the *Directory*. Otherwise the spectrum was for the birds. Link labored over the abbreviations that compilers of reference books use to make things difficult.

"3*rd pl. blvd. hab. ox atm* .2/3 *sea nml brine, usual ice-caps cloud-systems hab. est.* 1."

Then came the interesting part. In the clear language that informative books use with such reluctance, he read:

> This planet is said to have been colonized from Suheil 11 some centuries since, and may be inhabited but no spaceport is known to exist. The last report

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on this planet was from a spaceyacht some two centuries ago. The yacht called down asking permission to land and was threatened with destruction if it did. The yacht took pictures from space showing specks that could be villages or the ruins of same, but this is doubtful. No other landings or communications are known. Any records which might have existed on Suheil 11 were destroyed in the Economic Wars on that planet.

In the *Glamorgan's* control-room, Link was intrigued. He went back to the abbreviations and deciphered them.

Sord was a yellow sol-type sun with a mass of 1.4 sols and many faculae. Its third planet was believed habitable. It hadn't oxygen atmosphere, two-thirds of its surface was sea, the sea was normal brine and there were the usual ice-caps and cloud-systems of a planet whose habitability was estimated at one.

And two centuries ago its inhabitants had threatened to smash a spaceyacht which wanted to land on it.

According to Thistlethwaite, the bill for the last evening's relaxation, for Link, amounted to twenty-some years to be served in jail. Even with some sentences running concurrently, it was preferable not to return to Trent. On the other hand —

But it didn't really need to be thought about. Thistlethwaite plainly intended to go to Sord Three, whose inhabitants strongly preferred to be left alone.

But they seemed to have made an exception in his favor.

He was so anxious to get there and so confident of a welcome that he'd bought the *Glamorgan* and loaded her up with freight, and he'd taken an unholy chance in his choice of a ship. He'd taken another in depending on Link as an astrogator. But it would be a pity to disappoint him!

So Link carefully copied down in the log the three coordinates of Sord Three, and hunted up its proper solar motion, and put that in the log, and then put the figures in the computer and copied the answer in the log, too. It seemed the professional thing to do. Then he scraped away frost from the ports and got observations of the *Glamorgan's* current heading, and went back to the board and adjusted that. He was just entering the last item in the log when Thistlethwaite came in. His hands were black from the work he'd done, and somehow he gave the impression of a man who had used up all his store of naughty words and still was unrelieved.

"Well?" asked Link pleasantly.

"We're leakin' air," said the whiskered man bitterly. "It's whistlin' out! Playin' tunes as it goes! I had to seal off the space-boat blister. If we need that space-boat we'll be in a fix! When my business gets goin', I'll never use another junk ship like this! You raised hell in that take-off!"

"It's very bad?" asked Link?"

"I shut off all the compartments I couldn't seal tight," said Thistlethwaite bitterly. "And there's still some leakage in the engine-room, but I can't find it."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Link asked:

"How's the air supply?"

"I pumped up on Trent," said the little man. "If they'd known, they'd ha' charged me for that, too!"

"Can we make out for two weeks?" asked Link.

"We can make out for ten!" snapped the whiskery one. "There's only two of us an' we can seal off everything but the control-room an' the engine-room an' a way between 'em. We can go ten weeks!"

"Then," said Link relievedly, "we'll all right." He made final adjustments. "The engines are all right?"

He looked up pleasantly, his hand on a switch.

"With coddlin'," said Thistlethwaite: "What're you doin'?" he demanded suspiciously. "I ain't give you—"

Link threw the circuit-completing switch. The universe seemed to reel. Everything appeared to turn inside out, including Link's stomach. He had the feeling of panicky fall in a contracting spiral. The lights in the control-room dimmed almost to extinction. The whiskery man uttered a strangled howl. This was the normal experience when going into overdrive travel at a number of times the speed of light.

Then, abruptly, everything was all right again.

The vision-ports were dark, but the lights came back to full brightness. The *Glamorgan* was in overdrive, hurtling through emptiness very, very much faster than theory permitted in the normal universe. But the universe immediately around the *Glamorgan* was not normal. The ship was in an overdrive field, which does not occur normally at all.

"What the hell you done?" raged Thistlethwaite. "Where you headed for? I didn't tell you—"

"I'm driving the ship," said Link pleasantly, "for a place called Sord Three. There ought to be some good business prospects there. Isn't that where you want to go?"

The little man's face turned purple. He glared.

"How'd you find that out?" he demanded ferociously.

"Why, I've got friends there," said Link untruthfully.

The little man leaped for him, uttering howls of fury.

Link turned off the ship's gravity. Thistlethwaite wound up bouncing against the ceiling. He clung there, swearing. Link kept his hand on the gravity-button. At any instant he could throw the gravity back on, and as immediately off again.

"Tut, tut!" said Link reproachfully. "Such naughty words! And I thought you'd be pleased to find your junior partner displaying energy and enthusiasm and using his brains loyally to further the magnificent business enterprise we've started!"

III

The *Glamorgan* bored on through space. Not normal space, of course. In the ordinary sort of space between suns and planets and solar systems generally, a ship is strictly limited to ninety-eight point something per cent of the speed of light, because mass increases with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

speed and inertia increases with mass. But in an overdrive-field the properties of space are modified. The effect of a magnet on iron is changed past recognition. The effect of electrostatic stress on dielectrics is wholly abnormal. And inertia, instead of multiplying itself with high velocity, becomes as undetectable as at zero velocity. In fact, theory say that a ship has no velocity on an over-drive field. The speed is of the field itself. The ship is carried. It goes along for the ride.

But there was no thinking about such abstractions on the *Galmorgan*. The effect of overdrive was the same as if the ship did pierce space at many times the speed of light. Obviously, light from ahead was transposed a great many octaves upward, into something as different from light as long-wave radiation is from heat. This radiation was refracted outward from the ship by the overdrive field, and was therefore without effect upon instruments or persons. Light from behind was left there. Light from the sides was also refracted outward and away. The *Glamorgan* floated at ease in a hurtling, unsubstantial space-stress center. And to try to understand it might produce a headache, but hardly anything more useful.

But though the *Glamorgan* in overdrive attained the end of speed without the need for velocity, the human relaionship between Link and Thistlethwaite was less simple. The whiskery little man was impassioned about his enterprise. Link had guessed his highly secret destination and Thistlthwaite was out-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

raged by the achievement. Even when Link showed him how Sord Three had been revealed as the objective of the voyage, Thistlethwaite wasn't mollified. He clamped his lips shut tightly. He refused to give any further intimation about what he proposed to do when he arrived at Sord Three. Link knew only that he'd touched ground there in a spaceboat with one companion and they'd left a valuable cargo, and now Thistlethwaite was bound back there again — if Link could get him there.

There were times when it seemed doubtful. Then Link blamed himself for trying it. Still, Thistlethwaite had chosen the *Glamorgan* on his own and had gotten as far as Trent in her. But there were times when it didn't appear that the ship would ever get anywhere else. The log-book had a plentitude of emergencies written in its pages as the *Glamorgan* went onward.

She leaked air. They didn't try to keep the inside pressure up to the standard 14.7 pounds. They compromised on eleven, because they'd lose less air at the lower pressure. Even so, the fact that the *Glamorgan* leaked was only one of her oddities. She also smelled. Her air system was patched and her generators were cobbled, and at odd moments she made unrefined noises for no reason that anybody could find out. The water-pressure system sometimes worked and sometimes did not. The refrigeration unit occasionally turned on when it shouldn't and sometimes didn't when it should. It was wise to tap the thermostat several times a day.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The overdrive-field generator was also a subject for nightmares. Link didn't understand overdrive, but he did know that a field shouldn't be kept in existence by hand-wound outer layers on some of the coils, with wedges driven in to keep contacts tight which ought to be free to cut off in case of emergency. But it could be said that everything about the ship was an emergency. Link would have come to have a very great respect for Thistlethwaite because he kept such tinkered wreckage working. But he was appalled at the idea of anybody deliberately trusting his life to it.

The thing was, he realized ultimately, that Thistlethwaite was an eccentric.

The galaxy is full of crackpots each of whom has mysterious secret information about illimitable wealth to be found on the non-existent outer planets of rarely visited suns, or in the depths of the watery satellites of Cepheids. But crackpots only talk. Their ambition is to be admired as men of mystery and vast secret knowledge. They will never try actually to find the treasures they claim to know about. If you offer to provide a ship and crew to pick up the riches they describe in such detail, they'll impose impossible conditions. They don't want to risk their dreams by trying to make them come true.

But Thistlethwaite wasn't that way. He wasn't a crackpot. In his description of the wealth awaiting him, Link considered that he must be off the beam. There was no such treasure in the galaxy. But he'd been on Sord Three, and he'd had some money — enough to buy the *Glamorgan* and her cargo — and he was trying to get back. He'd cut Link in out of necessity, because the *Glamorgan* had to get off Trent when she did, or not get off at all. So Thistlethwaite was not a crackpot.

But an eccentric — that he was!

Fuming but resolute, the little man tried valiantly to make the ship hold together until his project was completed. From the beginning, four compartments besides the spaceboat blister were sealed off because they couldn't be made airtight. A fifth compartment lost half a pound of air every hour on the hour. Thistlethwaite labored over it, daubing extinguisher foam on joints and cracks until he found where the foam vanished first. Then he lavishly applied sealing compound. This was not the act of a crackpot who only wants to be admired. It was consistent with a far-out mentality which would run the wildest of risks to carry out a purpose. Moreover, when after days of labor he still couldn't bring the air loss down below half a pound a day, he sealed off that compartment too. The *Glamorgan* had been a tub to begin with. Now she displayed characteristics to make a reasonably patient man break down and cry.

Link offered to help in the sealing off process. Thistlethwaite snapped at him.

"You tend to your knitting and I'll tend to mine!" he said acidly. "You're so smart at workin' out

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

things I want to keep to myself —"

"I only found out where we're going," said Link. "I didn't find out why."

"To get rich," snapped Thistlethwaite. "That's why! I want to get rich! I spent my life bein' poor. Now I want to get kowtowed to! My first partner got money and he couldn't wait to enjoy it. I've waited! I'm not telling anybody anything! I know what I'm goin' to do! I got a talent for business. I never had a chance to use it. No capital. Now I'm going to get rich and do things like I always wanted to do!"

Link asked more questions and the little man turned waspishly upon him.

"That's my business, like runnin' this ship to where we're goin' is yours! You leave me be! I'm not riskin' you knowin' what I know. I'm not takin' the chance of you figurin' you'll do better cheatin' me than playin' fair!"

This was shrewdness, after a fashion. There are plenty of men who quite simply and naturally believe that the way to profit in any enterprise is to double-cross their associates. The whiskery man had evidently met them. He wasn't sure Link wasn't one of them. He kept his mouth shut.

"Eventually," said Link, "I'm going to come out of overdrive to check my course. Is that all right with you?"

"That's your business!" rasped Thistlethwaite. "You tend to your business and I'll tend to mine!"

He disappeared, prowling around the ship, checking the air pressure, spending long periods in the engine-room and not unfrequently coming silently and secretly up the stairway to the control-room to regard Link with inveterate suspicion.

It annoyed Link. So when he determined that he should break out of overdrive to verify his position — a dubious business, considering the limits of his knowledge — he did not notify Thistlethwaite. He simply broke out of overdrive.

There should have been merely an instant of intolerable vertigo and of intense nausea, and then the sensation of a spiral fall toward infinity, but nothing more. Those sensations occurred. But as they began there was also a wild rasping roar in the engine-room. Lights dimmed. Thistlethwaite howled with fury and flung himself down into an inferno of blue arcs and stinking scorched insulation. In that incredible nightmare-like atmosphere he hit something with a stick. He pulled violently at a rope. He spun a wheel rapidly. And the arcs died. The snip's ancient air system began to struggle with the smoke and smells.

It took him two days to make repairs, during which he did not address one syllable to Link. But Link was busy anyhow. He was taking observations and checking the process with the *Practical Astrogator* as he went along. Then he used the computer to make his observations mean something. He faithfully wrote all these exercises in the ship's log. It helped to pass the time. But when determination of the ship's position by three different methods

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gave the same result, he arrived at the astonishing conclusion that the *Glamorgan* was actually on course.

He was composing a tribute to himself for the feat when Thistlethwaite came bristling into the control-room.

"I fixed what you messed up," he said bitterly. "We can go on now! But next time you do something, don't do it till you ask me, and I'll fix it so you can! You could've wrecked us!"

Link opened his mouth to ask what could be a more complete wreck than the *Glamorgan* right now, but he refrained. He arranged for Thistlethwaite to go down into the engine-room. He shouted down the stairways. Thistlethwaite bellowed a reply. Link checked the ship's heading again, glanced at the ship's chronometer, and threw the overdrive on.

Nothing happened except vertigo and nausea and the feeling of falling in a spiral fashion toward nowhere at all. The *Glamorgan* was again in overdrive. The little man came in, brushing off his hands.

"That's the way," he said truculently, "to handle this ship!"

Link scribbled a memo of the instant the *Glamorgan* had gone into overdrive.

"In two days, four hours, thirty-three minutes and twenty seconds," he observed, "we'll want to break out again. We ought to be somewhere near Sord, then."

"If," said Thistlethwaite suspiciously, "*if* you're not tryin' to put something over on me!"

Link shrugged. He'd begun to wonder, lately, why he'd come on this highly mysterious journey. In one sense he'd had good reason. Jail. But now he began to be restless. He wore a stake-belt next to his skin, and in it he had certain small crystals. There were people who would murder him enthusiastically for those crystals. There were others who would pay him very large sums for them. The trouble was that he had no specific idea of what he wanted to do with a large sum. Small sums yes. He could relax with them. But large ones . . . He felt a need for the pleasingly unexpected. Even the exciting.

One day passed and he was definitely impatient. He was bored. He couldn't even think of anything to write in the log-book. There'd been a girl about whom he'd felt romantic, not so long ago. He tried to think sentimentally about her. He failed. He hadn't seen her in months and she was probably married to somebody else now. The thought didn't bother him. It was annoying that it didn't. He craved excitement and interesting happenings, and he was merely heading for a planet that hadn't made authenticated contact with the rest of the galaxy in two hundred years, and then had promised to shoot anybody who landed. He was only in a leaky ship whose machinery broke down frequently and might at any time burn out.

He was in a word, bored.

The second day passed. Four hours, thirty-three minutes remained. He tried to hope for interesting events. He knew of no reason to anticipate them. If Thistlethwaite

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were right, there would be only business dealings aground, and presently an attempt to get to somewhere else in the *Glamorgan* and after that —

The whiskery man went down into the engine-room and bellowed that everything was set. Link sat by the control-board, leaning on his elbows, in a mood of deep skepticism. He didn't believe anything in particular was likely to happen. Especially he didn't believe in Thistlethwaite's story of fabulous wealth. There was nothing as valuable as Thistlethwaite described. Such things simply didn't exist. But since he'd come this far....

Two minutes to go. One minute twenty seconds. Twenty seconds. Ten. Five. Four. Three. Two. One.

He flipped the overdrive switch to off. There were the customary sensations of dizzy fall and vertigo and nausea. Then the *Glamorgan* floated in normal space, and there was a sun not unreasonably far away, and all the sky was stars.

Link was even pessimistic about the identity of the sun, but a spectrophoto identified it. It was truly Sord. There were planets. One. Two. Three... Three had ice-caps, it looked as if two-thirds of its surface were sea, and in general it matched the *Directory's* description. It might — just possibly — be inhabited.

IV

A tediously long time later the *Glamorgan* floated in orbit around the third planet out from its sun.

Thistlethwaite watched in silence. There could be no communication with the ground, even if the ground was prepared to communicate. The *Glamorgan's* communication system didn't work. Link waited for the little man to identify his destination. When it was named there would probably be trouble.

"No maps," said Thistlethwaite bitterly, on the second time around. "I asked Old Man Addison for a map but he hardly knew what I meant. They never bothered to make 'em! But Old Man Addison's Household is near a bay, with mountains not too far off."

Link was not relieved. It isn't easy to find a landmark of limited size on a large world from a ship in space that has no maps or even a working communicator. But on the fourth orbital circuit, clouds that had formerly hidden a certain place had moved away. Thistlethwaite pointed.

"That's it!" he said, scowling as if to cover his own doubts. "That's it! Get her down yonder!"

Link took a deep breath.

Standard spaceport procedure is for a ship to call down by communicator, have coordinates supplied from the ground, get into position and wait. Then the landing-grid reaches out its forcefields and lets the ship down. It is neat, and comfortable, and safe. But there was no landing-grid here. There was no information. And Link had no experience, either.

He made one extra orbit to fix the indicated landing point in his mind and to try to guess at the rela-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tive speed of ship and planetary surface. On the seventh circling of the planet, he swung the ship so it travelled stern-first and its emergency-rockets could be used as retros. The drive engine would be useless here. Thistlethwaite stayed in the control-room to watch. He chewed agitatedly on wisps of whisker.

The ship hit atmosphere. There was a keening, howling sound, as if the ancient hull were protesting its own destruction. There were thumpings and bumpings. Loose plates rattled at their rivets and remaining welds.

Something came free and battered thunderously at other hull plates before it went crazily off to nowhere. Vibration began. It became a thoroughly ominous quivering of all the ship. Link threw over the rocket lever, and the vibration ceased to increase as the emergencies bellowed below. He gave them more power, and more, until the deceleration made it difficult to stand. Then, at very long last, the vibration seemed to lessen a very little.

The ship descended into a hurricane of wind from its own motion. Unbelievable noises sounded here and there. The hole where a plate had torn away developed an organ tone with the volume of a baby earthquake's roar.

The ship hurtled on. Far ahead there was blue sea. Nearer, there were mountains. There was a sandy look to the surface of the soil. Clouds enveloped the ship, and she came out below them, bellowing, and Link gave the rockets more braking power. But the ground still seemed to race past at an intolerable speed. He tilted the ship until her rockets did not support her at all, but only served as brakes.

Then she really went down, wallowing.

He fought her, learning how to land by doing it, but without even a close idea of what it should feel like. Twice he attempted to check his descent at the cost of not checking motion toward the now-not-so-distant shoreline. He began to hope. He concentrated on matching speed with the flowing landscape.

He made it. The ship moved almost imperceptibly with respect to such landmarks as he could see. Something vaguely resembling a village appeared, far below, but he could not attend to it. The ship suddenly hovered, no more than five thousand feet high. Then Link, sweating, started to ease down....

Thistlewaite protested agitatedly: "I saw a village! Get her down!"

Link cut the rockets entirely, the ship began to drop like a stone, and he cut them in again and out and in.

The *Glamorgan* landed with a tremendous crash. It teetered back and forth making loud grinding noises. It steadied. It stopped.

Link mopped his forehead. Thistlethwaite said accusingly:

"But this ain't where we shoulda landed! We shoulda stopped by that village! And even that ain't the one I want!"

"This is where we did land," said Link, "and lucky we made it! You don't know how lucky!"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He went to a port to look out. The ship had landed in a sort of hollow, liberally sprinkled with boulders of various shapes and sizes. Sandy hillocks with sparse vegetation on their slopes appeared on every hand. Despite the ship's upright position, Link could not see over the hills to a true horizon.

"I'll go over to that village we saw comin' down," said Thistlethwaite importantly, "an' arrange to send a message to my friends. Then we'll get down to business. And there's never been a business like this one before in all the time since us men stopped swappin' arrowheads! You stay here an' keep ship."

He swung the ship's one weapon — a stun-gun — over his shoulder. It gave him a rakish air. He put on a hat.

"Yep. You keep ship till I come back!"

He went down the stairs. Link heard him go down all the levels until he came to the exit port in one of the ship's landing fins.

From the control-room he saw Thistlethwaite stride grandly to the the top of the nearest hill, look exhaustively from there, and then march away with an air of great and confident composure. He went out of sight beyond the hillcrest.

Link went down to the exit port himself.

The air in the opening was fresh and markedly pleasant to breathe. He felt that it was about time that something interesting happened. This wasn't it. Here was only commonplace landscape, commonplace sky and commonplace tedium. He sat on the sill of the open exit port and waited without expectation for something interesting to happen.

Presently he heard tiny clickings. Two small animals, very much like pigs in size and appearance, came trotting hurriedly into view. Their hoofs had made the clicking sounds. They saw the ship and stopped short, staring at it. They didn't look dangerous.

"Hi, there," said Link companionably.

The small creatures vanished instantly. They plunged behind boulders. Link shrugged. He gazed about him. After a little, he saw an eye peering at him around a boulder. It was the eye of one of the pig-like animals. Link moved abruptly and the eye vanished.

A voice spoke, apparently from nowhere. It was scornful.

"Jumpy, huh? Scared?"

"I was startled," said Link mildly, "but I wouldn't say I was scared. Should I be?"

The voice said sardonically:

"Huh!"

There was silence again. There was stillness. A very sparse vegetation appeared to have existed where the *Glamorgan* came down on her rockets. Those scattered bits of growing stuff had been burned to ash by the rocket flames, but at the edge of the burned area some few small smouldering fragments sent threads of smoke skyward to be dissipated by wind that came over the hilltops. On a hillcrest itself a sand-devil whirled for a moment and then vanished

The voice said abruptly:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"You in the door there! Where'd you come from?"

Link said agreeably:

"From Trent."

"What's that?" demanded the voice, disparagingly.

"A planet — a world like this," explained Link.

The voice said:

"Huh!" There was a long pause. It said, "Why?"

Link had no idea what or who his unseen questioner might be, but the tone of the questioning was scornful. He felt that a certain impressiveness on his own part was in order. He said:

"That is something to be disclosed only to proper authority. The purpose of my companion and myself, however, is entirely admirable. I may say that in time to come it is probable that the anniversary of our landing will be celebrated over th entire planet."

Having made the statement, he rather admired it. Almost anything could be deduced from it, yet it did not mean a thing.

There was again a silence. Then the voice said cagily:

"Celebrated by uffts?"

Here Link made a slight but natural error. The word "uffts", which was unfamiliar, sounded very much like "us," and he took it for the latter. He said profoundly:

"I would say that that is a reasonable assumption."

Dead silence once more. It lasted for a long time. Then the same voice said sharply:

"Somebody's coming."

There came a scurrying behind the boulders. Little clickings sounded. There were flashes of pinkish white hide. Then the two pig-like creatures darted back into view, galloping madly for the hillcrest from which they'd come. They vanished beyond it. Link spoke again, but there was no reply.

For a long time silence lay over the hollow in which the *Glamorgan* had come to rest. Link spoke repeatedly; chattily; seriously. The silence seemed almost ominous. He began to realize that Thistlethwaite had been gone for a long time. It was well over an hour, now. He ought to be getting back.

He didn't come. Link was genuinely concerned when, at least another half-hour later, a remarkably improbable cavalcade came leisurely over the hillcrest crossed by Thistlethwaite to begin with, and the pig-like animals later.

The members of the cavalcade regarded the ship interestedly, and came on at a deliberate and unhurried pace. There were half a dozen men, mounted on large, splay-footed animals which had to be called unicorns because from the middle of their foreheads drooped flexible, flabby, horn-shaped appendages. The appendages looked discouraged. The facial expression of the animals that wore them was of complete, inquiring idiocy.

That was the first impression. The second was less pleasing. The leader of the riders wore Thistlethwaite's hat — it was too small for him — and had Thistlethwaite's stun-gun slung over his shoulder. Another rid-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

er wore Thistlethwaite's shirt and a third wore the whiskery man's pants. A fourth had his shoes dangling as an ornament from his saddle.

But of Thistlethwaite himself there was no sign.

All the newcomers carried long spears — lances — and wore at their belts large knives in decorated scabbards half the length of a sword.

The cavalcade came comfortably but ominously toward the *Glamorgan*. It came to a halt, its members regarding Link with expressions whose exact meaning it was not easy to decide. But Thistlethwaite had marched away from the ship with the only weapon on board, a stun-rifle. The leader of this group carried it, but without any sign of familiarity with it. Link considered that he could probably get inside the ship with the port door closed before anything drastic could happen to him. He should, too, find out what had happened to Thistlethwaite. So he said:

"How do you do? Nice weather, isn't it?"

V

There was a movement among the members of the cavalcade. The leader, wearing Thistlethwaite's hat and carrying his stun-rifle, looked significantly at his followers. Then he turned to Link and spoke with a certain painful politeness. There was no irony in it. It was manners. It was the most courteous of greetings.

"I'm pretty good, thank you, suh. And the weather's pretty good too, only we could do with a mite of rain." He paused, and said with an elaborate stateliness, "I'm the Householder of the Household over yonder. We heard your ship come down and we wondered about it. An' then — uh — somethin' happened and we come to look it over. We never seen a ship like this before, only o' course there's the tales from old times about 'em."

His manner was one of vast dignity. He wore Thistlethwaite's hat, and his companions or followers wore everything else that Thistlethwaite had had on in the *Glamorgan*. But he ignored the fact. It appeared that he obeyed strict rules of etiquette. And of course, people who follow etiquette are bound by it even in the preliminaries to homicide. Which is important if violence is in the air. Link took advantage of the known fact.

"It's not much of a ship," he said deprecatingly, "but such as it is I'm glad to have you see it."

The leader of the cavalcade was visibly pleased. He frowned, but he said with the same elaborate courtesy:

"My name's Harl, suh. Would you care to give me a name to call you by? I wouldn't presume for more than that."

Out of the corner of his eye Link saw that two pig-like animals had appeared not far away. They might be the same two he'd seen before. They squatted on their haunches and watched curiously what went on as between men. He said:

"My name's Link. Link Denham in fact. Pleased to meet you."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"The same, suh! The same!" The leader's tone became warm while remaining stately. "I take that very kindly, Link, tellin' me your last name too. And right off! Denham. Denham. I never met none of your Household before, but I'll remember it's a mannerly group. Would you — uh — have anything else to say?"

Link thought it over.

"I've come a long way," he observed. "I'm not sure what to say that would be most welcome —"

"Welcome!" said the man who called himself Harl. He beamed. "Now, that's right nice! Boys, we' been welcomed by this here Link and he's told us his last name and that's manners! This here gentleman ain't like that other fella! We're guestin'."

He slipped from his saddle, hung Thistlethwaite's stun-gun on his saddle horn and leaned his spear against the *Glamorgan*. He held out his hand cordially to Link. Link shook it. Harl's followers similarly divested themselves of weapons. They solemnly shook hands with Link. Harl rapped on one of the *Glamorgan's* hull plates and said admiringly:

"This here ship's iron, ain't it? M-m-m-h! I never saw so much iron to one place in all my lifetime!"

A scornful voice from somewhere said indignantly:

"We saw it first! It's ours!"

"Shut up," said Harl to the landscape at large. "And stay shut up." He turned. "Now, Link —"

"We saw it first!" insisted the voice furiously. "We saw it first! It's ours!"

"This gentleman," said Harl firmly, and again to the landscape, "is maybe thinkin' of settin' up a Household here! You uffts clear out!"

Two voices, now, insisted stridently:

"It's ours! We saw it first! It's ours!"

Harl said apologetically:

"I'm real sorry, Link, but you know how it is with uffts! Uh — I'd like to ask you something private . ."

"Come inside," said Link. He rose.

Harl and his companions — Link thought of the word "retainers" — came trooping into the port. Link was very alertly interested. He didn't understand this state of things at all, but men with inhospitable intentions do not disarm themselves. These men had. Men with unpleasant purposes tend to cast furtive glances from one to another. These men didn't. If one ignored the presence of Thistlethwaite's garments, and the absence of Thistlethwaite himself, the atmosphere was almost insanely cordial and friendly and uncalculating.

It verified past question that this planet had very little contact with other worlds. People of brisk and progressive cultures feel a deep suspicion of strangers and of each other.

Link let the small group precede him up the steps inside the landing fin.

He could get down and outside before any of them, and very probably lock them in. Then he'd be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

armed and mounted, which in case of unfriendliness might be an advantage. But in spite of whatever had happened to Thistlethwaite, the feel of things was in no sense ominous. The visitors to the ship were openly curious and openly astonished at what they saw.

They commented almost incredulously that the long flight of steps was made of iron. Link tactfully did not refer to the sealed-off cargo compartments — the lifeboat was sealed off too — nor to Thistlethwaite's garments worn so matter-of-factly by his guests. They passed the engine-room without recognizing the door to it as what it was. They marvelled to each other that iron showed through the worn floor-covering of the mess-room. They were astounded by the cabins. But the control-room left them entirely uninterested except for small metal objects — instruments — fastened to the control-board and fitted into the walls.

The man wearing Thistlethwaite's pants took a deep breath. He caught Link's eye and said wistfully:

"Mistuh Link, that's a right pretty little thing!"

He pointed to the ship's chronometer. Harl said angrily:

"You shut up! What kinda guest-gift have *you* brought? — I beg y'pardon, Link, for this fella!" He glared at his following. "Sput! You fellas go downstairs an' wait outside, so's you won't shame me again! I got to talk confidential to Mistuh Link, anyway."

His followers, still flaunting Thistlethwaite's garments, went trooping down and out. Silence fell, below. Then Harl said; "Link, I'm right sorry about that fella! Admirin' something of yours to get it, without givin' you a gift first! I'd ought to chase him outa my Household for bad manners! I hope you'll excuse me for him!"

"No harm done," said Link. "He just forgot."

It was evident that etiquette played a great part in the lives of the people of Sord Three. It looked promising. "I'd like to ask—"

Harl said confidentially:

"Let's talk private, Link. Do you know a little fella with whiskers that cusses dreadful an' insults people right an' left an' says—" his voice dropped to a shocked tone — "an' says he's a friend of Old Man Addison? A fella like that come to my Household and — you maybe won't believe this, Link, but it's so — he offered to pay me for sendin' a message to Old Man Addison! He — offered — to — pay — me! Like I was a ufft! I'm beggin' your pardon for askin' such a thing, but we're talkin' private. Do you know a fella like that?"

"He ran the engines of this ship," said Link. "His name's Thistlethwaite. I don't know what he has to do with Old Man Addison —"

"Natural!" said Harl hastily. "I wouldn't suspect you of anything like that! But — uh — the womenfolks said his clothes wasn't duplied. Is that a fact, Link? They went crazy fingerin' the cloth he was wearin'. Was it unduplied, Link?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I wouldn't know anything about his clothes," said Link. "I did notice your men were wearing them. I wondered—"

"But you didn't say a word," said Harl warmly. "Yes, suh! You got manners! But did you ever hear anything like what I just told you? Offerin' to pay me — and me a Householder! — for sendin' a message to Old Man Addison! Did you ever, Link?"

"It's bad?" asked Link, blinking.

"I left word," said Harl indignantly, "to hang him as soon as enough folks got together to enjoy it. What else could I do? But I'd heard the noise when this ship came down, and it was you, landin' here! It's a great thing havin' you land here, Link! And think of havin' clothes that ain't duplied! If you set up a household—"

Link stared. He'd always believed that he craved the new and the unpredictable. But this left him away behind. He felt that it would be a good idea to go off by himself and hold his head for a while. Yet Thistlethwaite—

"Sput!" said Harl, frowning to himself. "Here I am, guestin' with you, an' no guest-gift! But in a way you're guestin' with me, being this is on my Household land. And I ain't been hospitable! Look, Link! I'll send a ufft over with a message to hold up the hangin' till we get there and we'll go watch with the rest. What say?"

For perhaps the first time in his life, Link felt that things were a good deal more unexpected than he entirely enjoyed. There was only one way to stay ahead of developments until he could sort things out.

"That suggestion," he said profoundly, "is highly consistent with the emergency measures I feel should be substituted for apparently standard operational procedures with reference to discourteous space-travellers." He saw that Harl looked at once blank and admiring, which was what he'd hoped. "In oth-other words," said Link, "yes."

"Then let's get started," said Harl in a pleased tone. "Y'know, Link, you not only got manners, you got words! I got to introduce you to my sister!"

VI

When they reached the open air, the two pig-like animals had joined the party of waiting unicorns and men. They moved about underfoot, with the accustomed air of dogs with a hunting party of men. But they did not wear dogs' amiable expressions. They looked distinctly peevish.

"I want somebody to take a message," said Harl briskly. "It's worth two beers."

A pig-like animal looked at him scornfully. Link heard a voice remarkably resembling that of the invisible conversationalist he'd talked to before these men arrived.

"This is our ship!" said the voice stridently. "We saw if first!"

"You didn't tell us," said Harl firmly. "And we found it without you. Besides, it belongs to this gentleman. You want two beers?"

"Tyrant!" snapped the voice.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Robber! Grinding down the poor! Robbing—"

"Hush up!" said Harl. "Do you take the message or not?"

A second voice said defiantly:

"For four beers! It's worth ten!"

"All right, four beers it is," agreed Harl. "The message is not to hang that whiskery fella till we get there. We'll be right along."

The first scornful voice snapped:

"Who gets the message?"

"Tell my sister," said Harl impatiently. "Shoo!"

The two pig-like animals broke into a gallop together and went streaking over the nearest hill-crest. As they went, squabbling voices accused each other, the one because the bargain was for only two beers apiece, and the other for having gotten himself included in the bargain out of all reason. Link stared after them, his jaw dropped open. The voices dwindled, disputing, and ended as the piggish creatures disappeared.

Link swallowed and blinked. Harl appointed one of his followers to remain in the *Glamorgan* as caretaker. That left a splay-footed animal with a drooping nose-horn as a mount for Link.

Bemused and almost incredulous, he climbed into the saddle on a signal from Harl. The completely improbable cavalcade moved briskly away from the landed spaceship. It was not an indiscretion on Link's part. A caretaker remained with the ship, and Thistlethwaite was in trouble. Link went to try to get him out. Also, it appeared to be definite that Link had somehow made himself a guest in Harl's Household—whatever that might be—and etiquette protected him from ordinary peril so long as he did nothing equivalent to offering to pay to have a message delivered—rather, so long as he did nothing equivalent to offering to pay Harl for having a message delivered. It was approvable to offer to pay small animals like pigs, who could—

"My fella back there," said Harl reassuringly, as they mounted a hillock, and from its top saw other hillocks stretching away indefinitely—"my fella, he'll take good care of your ship, Link. I warned him not to touch a thing but just keep uffts out and if any human come by to say you're guestin' with me."

"Thanks," said Link. Then he said painfully, "Those small fat animals that look like pigs—"

"Uffts?" said Harl. "Don't you have 'em where you come from?"

"No," said Link. "We don't. It seems that—they talk!"

"Natural," Harl agreed. "They talk too much, if you ask me. Those two will stop on the way an' tell all the other uffts all about the message, and about you, an' everything. But they were on this world when the old-timers came an' settled here. They were the smartest critters on the planet. Plenty smart! But they're awful proud. They got brains. But they've got hoofs instead of hands, so all they can do is talk. They have big gatherin's and drink beer and make speeches to each other about how superior they are to human bein's because they ain't got paws like us."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The motion of the splay-footed unicorns was unpleasant. The one Link rode put down each foot separately, and the result was a series of swayings in various directions which had a tendency to make a rider seasick. Link struggled with that sensation. Harl appeared to be thinking deeply, and sadly. The unicorns were not hoofed animals so there was no sound of hoofbeats. There was only the creaking of saddle-leather and very occasionally the clatter of a spear or some other object against something else.

"Y'know," said Harl presently, "I'd like to believe that you comin' here, Link, is meant, or something. I've been getting pretty discouraged, with things seemin' to get worse all the time. Time was, the old folks say, when uffts was polite and respectful and did what they was told and took thank-you gifts and was glad to've done a human a favor. But nowadays they won't work for anybody without a agreement of just how much beer they're goin' to get for doin' it. And the old folks say there used to be unduplied cloth an' stuff that was better than we got now. And knives was better, an' tools was better, and there was lectric and machines and folks lived real comfortable. But lately it's been gettin' harder an' harder to get uffts to bring in greenstuff, an' they want more an' more beer for it. I tell you, it ain't simple, bein' a Householder these days! You got people to feed an' clothe, and the women fuss and the men get sour and the uffts set back and laugh — and make speeches to each other about how much smarter they are than us. I tell you, Link, it's time for something to happen, or things are goin' to get just so bad we can't stand them!"

The cavalcade went on, and Harl's voice continued. The thing he deplored came out properly marshalled, and it was evident that responsibilities in an imperfect universe had caused him much grief, of which he was entirely conscious.

Link caught an idea now and then, but most of Harl's melancholy referred to conditions Harl took as a matter of course and Link knew nothing about. For example, there was the idea that it was disgraceful to pay or be paid for anything that was done — except by uffts. On no other planet Link had heard of was commerce considered disreputable. He knew of none on which work was not supposed to be performed in exchange for wages. And there was — irrelevantly — the matter of Thistlethwaite's clothing. It was not "duplied." What was "duplied"? Everywhere, of course, the good old days are praised by those who managed to live through them. But when cloth was duplied it was inferior, and tools were inferior, and there was no more lectric — that would be electricity —and there were no more engines.

Link almost asked a question, then. The ancestors of Harl and his followers had colonized this planet from space. By spaceship. It was unthinkable that they hadn't had electricity and engines or motors. And when the way to make things is known and they are wanted, they are made! The way to make them is not forgotten! It simply isn't!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But according to Harl they'd had those things and lost them. Why?

Harl murmured on, with a sort of resigned unhappiness. The state of things on Sord Three was bad. He hoped Link's arrival might help, but it didn't seem really likely. He named ways in which times had formerly been better. He named matters in which deterioration had plainly gone a long way.

But he gave no clue to what made them worse, except that everything that was duplied was inferior, and everything was duplied. But what duplying was . . .

They passed over the top of rolling hill. Below them the ground was disturbed. An uncountable number of burrows broke its surface, with piles of dirt and stones as evidence of excavations below-ground. An incredible number of pink-skinned, pig-like creatures appeared to live here.

"This," said Harl uncomfortably "this is a ufft town. It's shortest to get back to the Household if we ride through it. They fuss a lot, but they don't ever actual do more than yell at humans goin' through. Bein' uffts, though, and knowing from those two I sent ahead that you're a stranger, they may be extra noisy just to show off."

Link shrugged.

"You fellas," said Harl sternly to his following, "don't you pay any attention to what they say! Hear me? Ignore 'em!"

The cavalcade rode down the farther hillside and entered the ufft metropolis. The splay-footed unicorns walked daintily, avoiding the innumerable holes which were exactly large enough to let full-grown uffts pop in and out with great rapidity. Had Link known prairie-dogs, he would have said that it was much like a much enlarged prairie-dog town. The burrows were arranged absolutely without pattern, here and there and everywhere. Uffts sat in their doorways, so to speak, and regarded the animals and men with scornful disapproval. It seemed to Link that they eyed him with special attention, and not too much of cordiality.

A voice from somewhere among the burrows snapped:

"Humans! Huh! And here's a new one. Pth-th-th-th!" It was a Bronx cheer.

Another voice said icily, "Thieves! Robbers! Humans!"

A third voice cried shrilly. "Oppressors! Tyrants! Scoundrels!"

The six riders, including Link, gazed fixedly at the distance. They let their mounts pick their way. The scornful voices increased their clamor. Uffts — they did look astonishingly like pigs — popped out of burrows practically under the feet of the unicorns and cried out in rage:

"That's right! That's right! Tread on us! Show the stranger how you act! Tread on us!"

Uffts seemed to boil around the clump of unicorns. They dived out of sight as the large splay feet of the riding animals neared them, and then popped up immediately behind them with cries of rage. "Tyrants! Oppressors! Stranger, tell the galaxy what you see!" Then other confused

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shoutings: "Go ahead! Crush us! Are you ashamed to let the stranger see? It's what you want to do!"

There was a chorus of yapping ufft voices a little distance away. One of them, squatted upright, waved a forepaw to give the cadence for choral shouts of. "Men, go home! Men, go home! Men, go home!"

Harl looked unhappily at Link.

"They never had manners, Link. But this is worse than I've seen before. Some of it's to make you think bad of us, you bein' a stranger. I'm right sorry, Link."

"Humans seem pretty unpopular," said Link. "They aren't afraid of you though."

"I can't afford to be hard on 'em," admitted Harl. "I need 'em to bring in greenstuff, an' they know it. They work when they feel like they want some beer. They get enough beer for a party an' then they make speeches to each other about how grand they are an' how stupid us humans are. If I was to try to make 'em act respectful, they'd go get their beer from another Household, an' we wouldn't have any greenstuff brought in. So they know I know it. So they get plenty fresh!"

"Yah!" rasped a voice almost underfoot. "Humans! Humans have paws! Humans have hands! Shame! Shame! Shame!"

The unicorns plodded on, their flaccid upside-down horns drooping and wabbling. They climbed over mounds of dirt and stones, and down to level ground between burrows, and then over other mounds. Their gait was incredibly ungainly. The clamor of ufft voices increased. The nearby tumult was loud enough, but the ufft city stretched for a long way. It seemed that for miles to right and left there were shrilling, pink-skinned uffts galloping on their stubby legs to join in the abuse of the human party.

"Yah! Yah! Humans!" "Men, go home!" "Hide your paws, Humans!" A small group yelled in chorus, "The uffts will rise again! The uffts will rise again!" Yet another party roared — but some of the voices were squeaky—"Down with Households! Down with Tyrants! Down with Humans! Up with Uffts!"

The cavalcade was the center of a moving uproar. At the beginning there'd been some clear space around the feet of the unicorns. But uffts came from all directions, shrilling abuse. Swarms of rotund bodies scuttled up and over the heaps of dug-out dirt and stones, and they ran into other swarms, and they crowded each other closer to the mounted men. Some were unable to dart aside, and dived down into burrows to escape trampling. They popped out behind the unicorns to yap fresh insults. Then one popped out directly underneath a unicorn, and the unicorn's pillowy foot sent him rolling — and squealing — but unhurt and then there was an uproar.

"Dirty humans! Tyrants! Now you kill us — "

"Hold fast to your saddle, Link," said Harl bitterly. "They'll be bitin' the unicorns' feet in a minute.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

That'll be the devil! They'll run away and y'don't want to get thrown! Not down among them!"

Link reined aside and held up his hand for attention.

He was a stranger, and part of this demonstration was for him. He knew something about demonstrators. For one thing, they are always attracted, almost irresistibly, to new audiences. But there is another and profound weakness in the psychology of a mob. When it is farthest from sane behavior, it likes to be told how intelligent it is.

"My friends!" boomed Link, in a fine, carrying, oratorical voice. "My friends, back at the ship I had a conversation with two of your cultured and brilliant race, which filled me with even increased respect for your known intellectuality!"

There was a slight lessening of the tumult nearby. Some uffts had heard pleasing words. They listened.

"But that conversation was not necessary," Link announced splendidly, "to inform me of your brilliance. On my home planet the intellect of the uffts of Sord Three has already become a byword! When a knotty problem arises, someone is sure to say, 'Ah, if we could ask the uffts of Sord Three about this, they'd settle it!' "

The nearer uffts were definitely quieter. They shushed those just behind them. Then they shouted to Link to go on. There was still babbling and abuse, but it came from farther away.

"So I came here," Link announced in ringing tones, "to carry out a purpose which, if accomplished, will make it probable that the anniversary of my arrival will be celebrated over the entire surface of at least one planet! My friends, I call upon you to bring this about! I call upon you to cause such rejoicing as indubitably will modify the future of all intellectual activities! Which will bring about a permanent orientation ufftward of the more abstruse ratiocinations of the intellectuals of the galaxy! I call upon you, my friends, to give to other worlds the benefit of your brains!"

He paused. He knew that Harl listened with startled incomprehension. He could see out of the corner of his eyes that the other halted men were bemused and uneasy . . . but the uffts within hearing cheered. Those too far away to hear clearly were trying to silence those behind them. They cheered. Link bowed to the applause.

"I bring you," he boomed with a fine gesture, "I bring you a philosophical problem — which is also a problem in sophistic logic — that the greatest minds of my home planet have not been able to solve! I have come to ask the uffts of Sord Three to use their superlative intellects upon the baffling intellectual question! There must be an answer! But it has eluded the greatest brains of my home system. So I ask the uffts of Sord Three to become the pedagogues of my world. You are our only hope! But I do not feel merely hope! I feel confidence! I am sure that ufftian intellect will find the answer which will initiate a new era in intellectual processes!"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He paused again. There were more cheers. Much of the cheering came from uffts who cheered because other uffts were cheering.

"The problem," said Link impressively, and with ample volume, "the problem is this! You know what whiskers are. You know what shaving is. You know that a barber is a man who shaves off the whiskers of other men. Now — there is a Household in which there is a barber. He shaves everybody in the household who does not shave himself. He does not shave anybody who does shave himself. The ineluctable problem is, — who shaves the barber?"

He stopped. He looked earnestly at all parts of his audience.

"Who shaves the barber?" he repeated dramatically. "Consider this, my friends! Discuss it! It has baffled the philosophers and logicians of my home world! I have brought it to you in complete confidence that, without haste and after examining every aspect of the situation, you will penetrate its intricacies and find the one true solution! When this is done I shall return to my home world bearing the triumphant result of your cerebration and a new field of intellectual research will be opened for future generations!"

He made a gesture of finality. There was really loud cheering now. Link was a stranger. He had flattered the uffts and those near him were charmed by his tribute, and those farther away cheered because those near him had cheered, and those still farther away —

"Let's get going," said Link briefly.

The cavalcade took up its march again. But now there were groups of uffts running alongside Link's unicorn, cheering him from time to time and in between beginning to argue vociferously among themselves that the barber did or didn't shave himself because if he didn't — or if he did — why — and if he wore whiskers he would not shave himself and therefore would have to shave himself and therefore couldn't have whiskers . . .

The angular, ungainly unicorns moved in their slab-sided fashion across the remaining dirt-piles and burrows of the ufft city. Behind them, a buzz of argument began and rose to the sky, as uffts by thousands zestfully discussed the problem of the barber.

Harl rode in something like a brown study for a long way after the ufft metropolis was left behind. Then he said heavily:

"Uh — Link, did you sure-enough come here to ask the uffts that there question?"

"No," admitted Link. "But it seemed like a good idea to ask it."

Harl considered, then asked:

"What did you come here for, Link?"

Link considered in his turn. Viewing the matter dispassionately, he didn't seem to have had any clear-cut reason. One thing had led to another, and here he was. But a serious - minded character like Harl might find the truth difficult to understand. So Link said with a fine air of regret:

"I'll tell you, Harl. There was a girl named Imogene —"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Uh-uh," said Harl regretfully. "I'm gettin' kind of troubled about you, Link. You're guestin' with me, an' all that, but that whiskery fella that cussed so bad an' insulted me, he came on the spaceship with you. And that speech you made to those uffts — I don't understand it, Link. I just don't understand it! You seem like a right nice fella to me, but I'm a Householder and I got responsibilities. And I'm gettin' to think that with times like they are, and the uffts cheering you like they did, an' all my other troubles —"

"What?" asked Link.

"I hate to say it Link," said Harl apologetically, "an' it may not seem mannerly of me, but honest I think I'd better get you hung along with that whiskery fella that wanted to send a message to Old Man Addison. I won't *like* doin' it, Link. And I hope you won't take it unkindly. But it does look like I better hang you both to avoid trouble."

Harl's followers rearranged themselves, closing him in so there was no possibility of his escape.

VII

They reached the village which Harl pointed to with the comment that it was his Household. They rode into it, and there were a good many women and girls in sight. They were elaborately clothed in garments at once incredibly brilliant and sometimes patched. But only a few men were visible. There were no dogs, such as properly belong in a small human settlement, but there were uffts in the strees sauntering about entirely at their ease. Once the cavalcade passed two of them, squatted on their haunches in the position of quadrupeds sitting down, apparently deep in satisfying conversation. It overtook a small cart loaded with a remarkable mixture of leaves, weeds, roots, grass and all manner of similar debris. It looked like the trash from a gardening job, headed either for a compost-heap or for a place where it would be burned to be gotten rid of. But there were four uffts pulling it by leather thongs they held in their teeth. It had somehow the look of a personal enterprise of the uffts, personally carried out.

A little way on there was a similar cart backed up to a wide door in the largest building of the village. That cart was empty, but a man in strikingly colored — but patched — clothing was putting plastic bottles into it. The contents looked like beer. An ufft supervised the placing, counting aloud in a sardonic voice as if ostentatiously guarding against being cheated. Three other uffts waited for the tally to be complete.

The cavalcade drew rein at a grand entrance to this largest building. Harl dismounted and said heavily:

"Here's where I live. I don't see anything else to do but hang you, Link, but there's no need to lock you up. Come along with me. My fellas will be watchin' all the doors an' windows. You can't get away, though I mighty near wish you could."

The four other riders dismounted. There'd been no obvious sign of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Link's change of status, from warmly approved guest to somebody it seemed regrettably necessary to hang, but after Harl's decision his followers had matter-of-factly taken measures to prevent his escape. There was no hope of a successful dash now, nor was there any place to dash to.

Link climbed down to the ground. During all his life, up to now he'd craved the novel and the unexpected. But it hadn't happened that the prospect of being hanged had ever been a part of his life. In a way without realizing it, he'd taken the state of not being hanged for granted. He'd never felt that he needed to work out solid reasons against his hanging as a project. But Harl appeared to be wholly in earnest. His air of regret about the necessity seemed sincere, and Link rather startledly believed that he needed some good arguments. He needed them both good and quick.

"Come inside," said Harl gloomily. "I never had anything bother me so much, Link! I don't even know what it's mannerly to do about your ship. You ain't given it to me, and you welcomed me in it, so it would be disgraceful to take it. But it's the most iron I ever did see! And things are pretty bad for iron, like most other things. I got to think things out."

Link followed him through huge, wide doors. It looked like a ceremonial entrance-way. Inside there was a splendid hall hung with draperies that at some time had been impressive. They were a mass of embroidery from top to bottom and the original effect must have been one of genuine splendor. But they were ancient, now, and they showed it. At the end of the hall there was a grandiose, stately, canopied chair upon a raised dais. It looked like a chair of state. The effect was badly marred by electric panels which obviously didn't light, and by three uffts sprawled out and sleeping comfortably on the floor.

"Most of my fellas are away," said Harl worriedly. "A ufft came in yesterday with some bog-iron and said he'd found the biggest deposit of it that ever was found. But y'can't trust uffts. He wanted a thousand bottles of beer for showin' us where it was, and five bottles for every load we took away. So I got most of my fellas out huntin' for it themselves. The ufft'd think it was a smart trick to get a thousand bottles of beer out of me for nothing, and then laugh!"

One of the seemingly dozing uffts yawned elaborately. It was not exactly derisive, but it was not respectful, either.

Harl scowled. He led the way past the ceremonial chair and out a small-sized door just beyond. Here abruptly, there was open air again. And here, in a space some fifty by fifty feet, there was an absolutely startling garden.

It struck Link forcibly because it made him realize that at no time on the journey from the landed *Glamorgan* to the village had he seen a sign of cultivated land. But here, in a space less than twenty yards across, there was a ten-foot patch of wheat, and a five-foot patch of barley, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a row of root-plants which were almost certainly turnips. It was strictly a kitchen-garden, growing foodstuffs, but on so small a scale that it wouldn't markedly improve the diet of a single small family. In one corner there was an apple tree showing some small and wormy apples on it branches. There was another tree not yet of an age to bear fruit, but Link did not know what it was.

And there was a girl with a watering-can, carefully giving water to a row of radishes.

"Thana," said Harl, troubled. "This's Link Denham. He came down in that noise we heard a while ago. It was a spaceship. That whiskery fella came in it too. I'm goin' to have to hang Link along with him — I hate to do it, because he seems a nice fella — but I thought I'd have you talk to him beforehand. Coming from far-off, he might be able to tell you of some of those things you're always wishin' you knew."

To Link he added:

"This's my sister Thana. She runs this growin'-place and not many Households eat as fancy as mine does! See that apple tree?"

Link said, "Very pretty," and looked carefully at the girl. At this stage in his affairs he wasn't overlooking any bets. She'd be a pretty girl if she had a less troubled expression. But she did not smile when she looked at him.

"You'd better talk to that whiskery man," she said severely to her brother. "I had to have him put in a cage."

"Why not just have a fella watch him?" demanded Harl. "Even if a man is goin' to be hung, it ain't manners not to make him comfortable."

The girl looked at Link, embarrassed. She moved a little distance away. Harl went to her and she reported something in a low tone. Harl said vexedly:

"Sput! I never heard of such a thing! I—never—heard of such a thing! Link, I'm goin' to ask you to do me a favor."

Link in a state of very considerable confusion, listened.

"I'm goin' to ask you, Link," Harl said indignantly, "to go see that whiskery fella and tell him there's a end to my patience! He insulted me, an' that's all right. He'll get hung for it and that's the end of it. But you tell him he's got to behave himself until he *does* get hung! When it comes to tryin' to send a message to my sister — my sister, Link! — offerin' to pay *her* for sendin' a message to Old Man Addison — I'm not goin' to stand for it! He's gettin' hung for sayin' that to me! What more does he want?"

Link opened his mouth to suggest that perhaps Thistlethwaite wanted to get a message to Old Man Addison. But it did not seem tactful.

"You see him," said Harl wrathfully. "If I was to go I'd prob'ly have him hung right off, and all my fellas that didn't see it would think it was unmannerly of me not to wait. So you talk to him, will you?"

Link swallowed. Then he asked: "How will I find him?"

"Go in yonder," said Harl, point-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing, "and ask a ufft to show you. There'll be some house-uffts around. Ask any one of 'em."

He turned back to his sister. Link headed for the pointed-out door. He heard Harl, behind him, saying angrily:

"If he don't behave himself — sput! Hangin's too good for him!"

But then Link passed through the door and heard no more. Uffts in their own village were openly derisive of Harl. But they sauntered about his house and slept on his floors, and he certainly tolerated it! He found himself in a hallway with doors on either side and an unusually heavy door at the end.

An ufft slept tranquilly in the hall. It was very pig-like indeed. It looked like about a hundred-pound shote, with pinkish hide under a sparse coating of hair. Link stirred the creature with his foot. The ufft waked with a convulsive, frightened scramble of small hoofs.

"Where's the jail?" asked Link.

The ufft said sulkily, "What's a jail?"

"In this case, the room where that man who's to be hung is locked up," said Link. "Where is it?"

"There isn't any," said the ufft, more sulkily than before. "He's in a cage."

"Then where's the cage?"

"Around him," said the ufft with an air of extreme fretfulness. "Just because you humans have paws isn't any reason to wake people up when they're resting —"

"You!" snapped Link. "Where's that cage?"

The ufft backed away affrightedly.

"Don't do that!" it protested nervously. "Don't threaten me! Don't get me upset!"

"Then tell me what I want to know!"

The ufft summoned courage. It bolted. Some distance away it halted at a branching passage to stare at Link in the same extreme unease.

"He's in the cellar," said the ufft. "Down there!"

It pointed with a forehoof.

"Thanks," said Link, with irony.

The ufft protested, complainingly, "It's all very well for you to say thanks after you've scared a person —"

Link moved forward, and the ufft fled. But Link's intentions were not offensive. He was simply following instructions. He moved doggedly down the hallway, to a corner where a flight of steps went downward, to the left. He went down them. He heard voices. One of them had the quality of an ufft's speech.

"Now, we can do it. The fee will be five thousand beers."

Thistlethwaite sounded enraged.

"Business is business," said the other voice. "Four. After all, you're a human."

Link's foot made a scraping sound on the floor. There was an instant scuffling and low-voiced whispers and mutterings of alarm. Link went toward the sound and came to a place where a wick burned in a dish of oil. The light played upon a oversized cage of four-by-four timbers, elaborately lashed together with rope. Inside the cage, Thistle-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thwaite glared toward the sound of the interruption.

Beyond the cage there was a very neat pile of vision-receivers, all seemingly new and every one dusty. The combination — unused vision-receivers and a wick floating in a dish of oil for light — was startling. The light was primitive and smoky. The vision-sets were not. But the light worked and the vision-sets didn't.

"You'd better tell your boss," rasped Thistlethwaite to the sound that was Link, "that if he ever expects to do any business with Old Man Addison he'd better let me loose and give me back my clothes and—"

He stopped short. He and Link could see each other now. Thistlethwaite was bare and hairy and caged. At sight of Link he uttered a bellow of rage through the bars.

VII

"You!" he roared. "What' you doin' here? I told you to keep ship! You go back there! You want the ship to be claimed as jetsam—a abandoned ship with no representative of the owner on board? You get there! Lock y'self in! You stay on board till I finish my business dealin' and come an' tell you what to do next!"

"There's someone in charge," said Link mildly. "One of Harl's retainers is acting as watchman. For me. There've been developments since then, but that's that about the ship. I've got a message for you from Harl."

Thistlethwaite sputtered naughty words in naughtier combinations.

"It seems," said Link, "that to offer to pay a Householder for something is insult amounting to a crime. That's what you're to be hung for. Offering to pay a Householder's sister for something is a worse crime. It appears that doing business, except with uffts, is considered disgraceful. I don't see how they make it work, but there you are. If you'll apologize, I think there's a chance —"

Thistlethwaite cried out furiously, "How can you do business without doin' business? You go tell him—"

"I'd like to get you off," said Link mildly. "I'm supposed to be hanged, too. But if I get you a pardon I might get one for myself as a particept incriminus. So—"

He heard faint sounds. He said, "If you've a better way of getting out of being hanged than apologizing, I'd like to join you. I have an idea that there are persons of larger view than—ah—the humans on Sord Three. I refer to that brilliantly intellectual race, the uffts. With their cooperation—"

He definitely heard faint sounds. There had been voices before he arrived at Thistlethwaite's cage. He waited hopefully.

"Look here!" snapped Thistlethwaite, "I'm the senior partner in this business! You signed a contract leavin' all decisions to me an' you doin' only astrogatin'! You leave this kinda business to me! I'll tend to it!"

There was a slight scraping noise.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

An ufft came out from behind the pile of vision-sets. Other uffts appeared from other places. The first ufft said:

"You said you are to be hanged. Would you be interested in a deal with us? We can do all sorts of jail-deliveries, strikes, sabotage, spying and intelligence work, and we specialize in political demonstrations." The ufft grew enthusiastic. "How about a public demonstration against hanging visitors from other worlds? Mobs shouting in the streets! Pickets around the Householder's home! Chanted slogans! Marching students! And demonstrators lying on the ground and daring men to ride unicorns over them!"

"Can you guarantee results?" asked Link politely.

"It'll be known all over the planet!" said the ufft proudly. "Everyone will know about it. Public opinion will be mobilized!"

"But what," asked Link as politely as before, "just what will be the actual physical result? Will Thistlethwaite be released? And I'm supposed to be hanged too. Will I be pardoned? What will Harl actually do in response to all these demonstrations?"

"His name will go down in history as among the most despicable of all tyrants who tried to keep us uffts in bondage!"

"Not in human histories," said Link. "And I hate to say it, but our ghosts won't get the least bit of comfort out of even the most violent of public, reactions after the actual event."

The ufft made no reply.

"I have a thought," said Link patiently. "Thistlethwaite apologizes. He didn't know the local customs. He asked Harl to forgive him and permit him to make a guest-gift of the clothes and the stun-rifle Harl has already taken. No expense there! Then he asks Harl to instruct us in local etiquette so he can observe it in future contacts."

"I won't do it!" raged Thistlethwaite ferociously. "I won't do it! I'm goin' to run this in a business-like way! That ain't business!"

"It's sense," observed Link.

"You're fired!" bellowed Thistlethwaite. "You ain't a junior partner any more!"

Link looked at him earnestly, but the little man glared furiously at him. Link shrugged and went away. He returned to the garden where Harl paced up and down and up and down and where his sister again watered a row of not over-prosperous plants.

"Thistlethwaite," said Link untruthfully, "had an unhappy childhood, practically surrounded by people with the manners, morals and many of the customs of uffts. It warped his whole personality. He is aware that he ought to apologize for having insulted you. But he's ashamed. He feels that he should be punished. Also he feels that he should make reparation. At the moment he is struggling between a death-wish and an inferiority complex. He will offer no more insults unless the struggle goes the wrong way."

Harl scowled.

"But there is a reasonable prob-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ability," added Link, "that he will end up by making the spaceship and its cargo his guest-gift to you. That would get you out of an unpleasant dilemma. It would be very mannerly to accept it. You'd have the ship and your manners in getting it would be above reproach."

Harl said suspiciously, "How much time is he likely to take?"

"When were you planning to hang us?" asked Link.

"After the fellas get back," said Harl. "Then maybe a while for them to have their suppers. It'll make a right interestin' spectacle — flamin' torches an' such. My fellas will talk about it for years!"

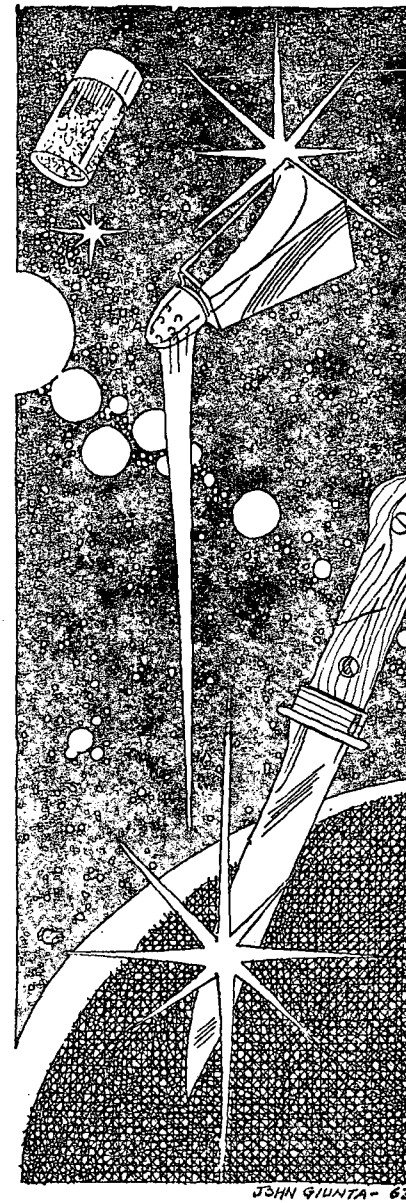
"Just take it easy," advised Link. "Don't hurry things. He'll come around before anybody gets too sleepy to appreciate his hanging!"

He hoped it was true. It ought to be. But Harl paced up and down.

"I wouldn't want to do anything unmannerly," he said grudgingly. "All right. I'll give him until hangin' time." Then he seemed to rouse himself. "Thana, you pick the stuff for supper and I'll get it duplied while you ask Link about the things you want to know."

The girl plucked half a dozen lettuce-plants. A handful of peas. She examined the apples on the tree and picked one. It was a small and scrawny apple. Link saw a worm-hole near its stem. She handed the vegetation to her brother. Then she said to Link, "I'll show you."

She led him into the building, and they were in the great hall with the canopied chair. She led the way



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

across the hall and into a smaller room. It was lined with shelves, and ranged upon them were all the objects a Householder could desire or feel called on to supply to his retainers. There were shelves of tools but only one of each. There were shelves of cloth. Much of it was incredibly beautiful embroidery, but it was age-yellowed and old. There were knives of various shapes and sizes, and plates — dishes — and glassware, and bits of small hardware, and sandals and purses and neckerchiefs — but these last categories were in poor condition indeed — and in general every artifact of a culture which had made vision-sets and now used floating wicks in oil for illumination.

Link suddenly knew that this was in a sense the treasury of the Household. But there was only one of each object on display.

Thana pulled out a drawer and showed Link an assortment of rocks and stones of every imaginable variety. She searched his face and said:

"When you make a stew, you put in meat and flour and what vegetables you have. That's right, isn't it?"

"I suppose so," agreed Link, somewhat baffled.

"But," said Thana, "it doesn't taste very good unless you put in salt and herbs. That's right too, isn't it?"

"I'm sure it is," said Link. "But this is what do—"

"Here's a knife." It was in the drawer with the rocks. She handed it to him. It was a perfectly ordinary knife; good steel, of a more or less antique shape, with a mended handle. It had probably had a handle of bone or plastic which by some accident had been destroyed, so someone had painstakingly fitted a new one of wood. She reached to a shelf and picked up another knife. She handed it to Link, too.

He looked at the pair of them, at first puzzled and then incredulous. They were identical. They were really identical! They were as identical as Link had ever seen two objects before. There was a scratch on the handle of each. The scratches were identical. There was a partly broken rivet in one, and the same rivet was partly broken in precisely the same fashion in the other. The resemblance was microscopically exact! Link went to a window to examine them again, and the grain of the wooden handles had the same pattern, the same sequence of growth rings, and there was a jagged nick in one blade, and a precise duplicate of that nick in the other. Perhaps it was the wood that most bewildered Link. No two pieces of wood are ever exactly alike. It can't happen. But here it had.

"This knife is duplied from that," said Thana. "This one is duplied. That one isn't. The unduplied one is better. It's sharper and stays sharper. Its edge doesn't turn. I —" she hesitated a moment—"I've been wondering if it isn't something like a stew. Maybe the unduplied knife has something in it like salt, that's been left out of the duplied one. Maybe we didn't give it something it needs — like salt. Could that be so?"

Link gaped at her. She didn't look troubled now. She looked appealing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and anxious. And when she didn't look troubled she was a very pretty girl. He noticed that even in this moment of astonishment. Because he began to make a very wild guess at what might explain human society on Sord Three.

His limited experience with it was baffling. From the moment when he sat on the exit-port threshold of the *Glamorgan* and chatted with an invisible conversationalist, to the moment he'd been told regretfully by Harl that he'd have to be hanged because of a speech he'd made about a barber, every single happening had confused him. It seemed that beer was currency. It seemed that a fifty-foot-square garden somehow supplied food for an entire village, though its plants seemed quite ordinary.

Right now, dazedly surveying the whole experience, he recalled that there was no highway leading to the village. No road. It was not irrelevant. It fitted into the preposterous entire pattern.

"Wait a minute!" said Harl, astounded and still unbelieving. "When you — duply something, you furnish a sample and the material for it to something and it—duplicates the sample?"

"Of course," said Thana. Her forehead wrinkled a little as she watched his expression. "I want to know if the reason some duplied things aren't as good as unduplied ones is that we leave something out of the material we give the duplier to duply unduplied things with."

His expression did not satisfy her.

"Of course if the sample is poor, the duplied thing will be poor quality too. That's why our cloth is so weak. The samples are all old and brittle and weak. So duplied cloth is brittle and weak too. But —" She asked unbelievingly, "Don't you have dupliers where you come from?"

Link swallowed. If what Thana said was true an enormous number of things fell into place, including Thistlethwaite's scornful conviction tion that wealth in carynths was garbage compared with the wealth that could be had from one trading-voyage to Sord Three. If what Thana said was true, that was true, too.

But there were other consequences. If dupliers were exported from Sord Three, the civilization of the galaxy could collapse. There was no business on Sord Three. Naturally! When should anybody manufacture or grow anything if raw material could be supplied and an existent specimen exactly reproduced? What price riches, manufactures, crops — civilization itself? What price anything?

Here the price was manners. If someone admired something you owned, you gave it to him — it or a duplied, microscopically accurate replica. Or maybe you kept the replica and gave him the original. It didn't matter. They'd be the same! But the rest of the galaxy wouldn't find it easy to practice such manners, after scores of thousands of years of uncouth habits!

"Don't they have dupliers where you come from?" repeated Thana. She was astonished at the very idea.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"No-no," said Link, dry-throated.

"But you poor things!" said Thane commiseratingly. "How do you live?"

For the first time in his life, Link was actually terrified.

"We don't," he said thinly. "At least, we won't live long!"

IX

There was movement in the great hall next door, but Thana paid no attention. She put one knife back on the shelf from which she'd taken it. She began to show Link the collection of small rocks and stones she'd accumulated.

"Here's a piece of rock we call bog-iron," she said absorbedly. "It has iron in it. Put this rock, with some wood, in the duplier, and a sample knife for it to duply, and the duplier takes iron out of the bog-iron and wood out of the wood and makes another knife. Of course the rock crumbles because part of it has been taken away. So does the wood, for the same reason. But then we have another knife. Only it's only so good. So I thought that if an unduplied knife has something besides iron in it — like a stew has salt — maybe if I found the right kind of rock the duplier would take something out of it, and if it was the right kind of whatever-it-is, the duplied knife would be as good as the original because it had everything in it the original knife had."

"Yes," said Link, still dizzy. "It would. It should. If you get the right kind of rock."

"Do you know what kind that would be?" asked Thana eagerly.

Link shook his head.

"Not I," he said wrily. "It's a special profession to know what rocks are ores and which aren't. Some of these rocks I do recognize. That blue one may have copper in it. I've seen it but I'm not sure. This pink one I know. I spent months digging it out in mountain-size masses, looking for a place where a meteor might have struck it. But the rest of them—no."

She looked distressed.

"Then there's not much use in having guessed something right, is there? When you go away in your spaceship could you send somebody back who does know about rocks? We might even have lectric again!"

"I'm supposed to be hung," said Link more wryly still. "And even if I could, I don't think I'd do it. Because he'd go away again and tell the outside worlds that you have dupliers on Sord Three. And men would come here to take them away from you. They'd rob you at least, more likely murder you to get your dupliers and then they'd take them and destroy themselves."

He made a rather absurd gesture. When one has been raised in a galaxy where every world has its own government, but they are so far apart that they can't fight each other, patriotism as loyalty to a given place or planet tends to die out. It has no function. It serves no purpose. But Link knew now that when men no longer cherished small nations, whether they knew it or not they were loyal to mankind.

And dupliers released to mankind would amount to treason.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If there can be a device which performs every sort of work a world wants done, then those who first have that instrument are rich beyond the dreams of anything but pride. But pride will make riches a drug upon the market. Men will no longer work, because there is no need for their work. Men will starve because there is no longer any need to provide them with food. There will be no way to earn necessities. One can only take them. And presently nobody will attempt to provide them to be taken.

Thana said interestedly:

"There are stories about the fighting back on Suheil Two before our ancestors ran away. Everybody was trying to kill them because they had dupliers. They had to flee. It seems ridiculous, but they did run away, in spaceships, and they came here. There were only a few hundreds of them. The uffts made quite a fuss about their setting up Households, but the men had beer and the uffts couldn't make it. So things got straightened out in time. But for a long, long while it was believed that nobody from any other world must ever be allowed to land here. I'm glad you landed, though."

"To be hanged," said Link.

But he understood the history of Sord Three better than she did. He could imagine the Economic Wars on Suheil Two, after the ancestors of Thana, had fled. There were dupliers that weren't taken away by the fugitives. So men fought to possess them, and other men fought to take them away, and ultimately they'd be destroyed by men who couldn't defend them. And then there'd be wholesale murder for food, and brigandage for what scraps were left . . . And at last civilization would have to start all over again with starving people and unplanted fields for a beginning. But no dupliers.

Here the disaster had taken a different form. While dupliers worked there was no need to learn useful things, such as the mechanical arts and chemistry, and mineralogy. So such knowledge was forgotten. The art of weaving would vanish, too, when dupliers could make cloth to any demand. Electrical apparatus could not work without rare metals nobody knew how to find for the dupliers. So when the original units wore out there was no more electricity. And all cloth grows old and yellow and brittle; so old cloth, duplied, merely meant more old cloth. And since the smallest of gardens, with any kind of vegetable matter for raw material, could have its produce duplied without limit, only the smallest of gardens were cultivated. Wherefore Harl's Household was hung with rich drapery which was falling apart, the carpets on its floors were threadbare, and he was proud that his Household had one scrawny apple tree with wormy fruit on it.

"I begin," said Link unhappily, "to agree with Harl. Since Thistlethlaite can't hope to astrogate his ship if I'm hanged, he can't report the state of things without me. So it's probably wise to hang me. On the other hand I couldn't run the ship's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

engines, so I couldn't take the news if he were hanged. But one or the other of us should definitely be disposed of."

Thana said sympathetically, "You feel terrible, don't you? Let's go see Harl. Maybe you'll feel better. No, wait!" An idea had occurred to her. She surveyed a shelf of elaborately embroidered garments. She picked out one. "Do you think this is pretty?"

"Very," said Link forlornly. There hadn't been too many things he'd taken seriously in his lifetime. But he did know that if dupliers got loose in the galaxy, there'd be no man certain of his life if he hadn't a duplier, nor any man whose life was worth a pebble if he did.

"Fine!" said Thana brightly. "Come along!"

She picked up a bundle of what looked like ancient, yellowed cloth scraps, plus a lump of bog-iron. She led the way into the great hall of the household.

Her brother Harl was there, wearing an expression of patient gloom. There were two retainers working at something which gradually became clear. A third man rolled in a large wheeled box from somewhere. It was filled to the brim with a confused mass of leaves and roots and branches and weeds. It was the mixture uffts had been dragging into the village in a wheeled cart some little while ago. As a mixture, it belonged on a compost heap or on a brush pile to be burned. But instead it was brought into the hall with the incredible, falling-apart, floor-to-ceiling draperies.

There was a stirring. The dais and the canopied chair moved. Together, chair and dais rose ceilingward. A deep pit was revealed where they had stood. And something rose in the pit, like a freight elevator. It came plainly into view, and it was a complex metal contrivance with three hoppers on top which were plainly meant to hold things. One of the hoppers contained a damp mass of greenish powder in a highly irregular mound. One of Harl's retainers began to brush that out into a box for waste. The middle hopper contained a pile of apples, all small, all scrawny, and each with a worm-hole next its stem. It contained a bushel or more of lettuce heaped up with the apples. The rest of the hopper was filled with peas.

The third of the hoppers contained an exact duplicate of the contents of the middle hopper. Each leaf of lettuce in the third hopper was a duplicate of one in the middle hopper. Each apple was a duplicate of an apple in the middle hopper. Each pea —

"Pyramid it once more," said Harl "and it'll be enough."

His retainers piled the contents of the third hopper into the second. They piled the first one high with the contents of the box of vegetable debris. Link knew the theory now. The trash was vegetation. There were the same elements and same compounds in the trash as in apples, lettuce-leaves and peas. The proportions would be different, but the substance would be there. The duplier would take from the trash the materials needed to duplicate the sam-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ple edibles. The same thing could more or less be done with roasts and steaks. Or elaborate embroidery, provided one had a sample for the duplier to work from. There would be left-over raw materials, of course, but a duplier could duplicate anything. Including a duplier.

And that was the thought which was frightening.

Harl said, "All right."

The men moved back. The contrivance descended into the pit. The chair of state descended until its dais rested on the floor, covering the pit. Harl said casually:

"How'd you make out, Thana? Does Link know some of the things you were wonderin' about?"

"Most of them," said Thana confidently. "Nearly all!"

It was less than an accurate statement, and Link wondered morosely why she made it. But then Harl pressed the button. The chair of state rose. The deep pit was revealed. The metal contrivance rose to floor level. The pile of assorted fragments in the first hopper had practically vanished. The fruit and lettuce and peas in the second hopper were unchanged. The third hopper was full of an exact duplicate of the assortment of edibles in the middle one.

"We don't need any more," observed Harl. "Just clean up and —"

"Wait!" said Thana. "I was showing Link things, and he admired this shirt."

She unfolded the garment. Link opened his mouth, but Harl said indulgently, "All right."

Thana put the shirt in the middle — sample — hopper. Then she said:

"He told me the knife you've got is the prettiest he's seen, too."

Harl said, "Sput!" His tone was not entirely pleased. Then he said, "I got to have manners, huh?"

"Of course," said Thana.

With a grimace, Harl unbuckled his belt and handed the belt and knife to Thana. She put them into the middle hopper. Then she put bog-iron, wood and the scraps of cloth from the treasury room into the raw-materials place. She nodded to her brother.

He pressed something, the chair of state sank down, following the duplier mechanism, the room looked normal for a moment, and then the chair of state rose up, the pit appeared, and then the duplier.

There was much less bog-iron in the materials hopper. There was some sand on the hopper bottom. The embroidered shirt and the knife and belt were — as they'd been before — in the middle hopper. Exact duplicates of both knife and shirt were in the third hopper.

Thana handed her brother his knife. She took out and put aside the sample garment. She spread out its duplicate and said to Link, "Do put it on! Please!"

Harl watched impatiently as Link took off his own shirt and donned the embroidered one, embarrassed by his own decorative appearance in the new apparel. Thana picked up the shirt he'd taken off.

"Look! This is unduplied, Harl!" she said with extravagant admiration. "Have you ever seen anything so wonderful?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Sput!" said Harl angrily. "What you tryin' to do?"

"I'm saying that this is a wonderful shirt," said Thana, beaming. "It isn't duplied. It's the nicest, newest shirt I've ever seen. Don't you think so? I dare you to lie and still pretend you've manners!"

Harl said, "Sput!" again, and then:

"All right," he admitted peevishly. "It's true. I never saw a new, unduplied shirt before. It's a nice shirt."

Thana turned triumphantly to Link. He didn't see any reason for triumph. But she waited, and waited. Harl glared at him. Suddenly, Link understood. He might be scheduled to hang, but he was expected to be mannerly.

"The shirt is yours," he said dourly to Harl. "It's a gift."

Harl hesitated for what seemed a long time. Then:

"Thanks," he said reluctantly. "It's a right nice guest-gift."

Thana looked radiant. She sent one of the retainers, standing by, for all the cloth on the treasury-room shelves. She fairly glowed with enthusiasm. She put Link's former shirt in the sample hopper and filled another with scraps, and sent the duplier down. It came up and there were two shirts. It went down again with two shirts in the sample hopper. When it came up there were four. The chair of state and the duplier went down and up and down and up and down and up. When the last morsel of raw material was exhausted, there were one hundred twenty-seven duplicates of Link's own shirt, besides the original shirt itself.

"I guess that'll do," said Harl, ungraciously. "I'll be sendin' gifts to all my friends, and all my own fellas will have new shirts, an' their wives'll be takin' 'em apart to make dresses and sheets and stuff." He nodded to Link. "I appreciate that shirt a lot, Link. Thanks."

X

He went away, and Link stirred stiffly. He'd watched the entire process. Objects could be duplicated without labor or skill or industry. He'd observed what his mind told him was the doom of human civilization — unless he or Thistlethwaite were hung. But now he saw something more.

Even that would not preserve the galaxy from destroying itself by riches out of dupliers. Eventually — certainly — another ship must land on Sord Three. It might be by accident. But some day another ship would come. And then this same intolerable situation would exist again.

"I'll see about dinner now," said Thana. She turned warm, grateful, admiring eyes upon Link, and vanished.

Harl shook his head as she disappeared.

"Smart girl, that. I wouldn't ha' thought of usin' manners to get your shirt off your back so's I could admire it and have the first new cloth since the old days! Mighty smart girl, Link!"

Link said stiffly, "If you're through with taking my shirt in vain —what now?"

Harl looked surprised.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Oh, you go off somewheres and set down and rest yourself, Link," he said kindly. "I got things to do. Excuse me!"

He departed. Link was left alone in the great hall, morbidly weighing the alternatives — himself or Thistlethwaite or both of them hanged, against the collapse of all the economy of all the galaxy, with wars, murders, lootings and rapine as a necessary consequence.

Link scowled. He alone could envision the coming disaster. He alone could think of measures to prevent it. And he was supposed to be hanged presently for a speech about an imaginary barber! It was wrong! It was monstrous! He had to stay alive to save the galaxy from the otherwise inevitable!

There was an ufft seemingly asleep in the far corner of the hall. As Link approached, the ufft opened its eyes.

"Why didn't you tell Harl you admired Thana when he said she was a smart girl?"

The ufft had evidently been eavesdropping. It occurred to Link that there probably weren't many human secrets unknown to the uffts, as they lounged about the village streets, and casually napped in the Householder's home itself.

"Why should I say that?" asked Link irritably.

If you want to marry her," said the ufft, "that's the start of it."

"But I just met her!" said Link.

The ufft stirred, in a manner suggesting a shrug by a four-footed animal lying prone on the floor.

"And what are you going to do about Thistlethwaite?" the ufft demanded. "He's going to escape. It's all arranged. Three thousand bottles of beer, payable by written contract when he gets to Old Man Addison's. But he's mad with you. He says you're not part of his organization any more. You're fired for disobeying orders to stay in the ship. He says he got you for an astrogator —what's an astrogator?—because he couldn't get anybody better. He says he can astrogate the ship to where he wants to go by doing everything you did, backwards." Link though sulfurous thoughts. The ufft went on, "He says he and Old Man Addison will make new history on Sord Three. —Why is Sord Three Sord Three? Why not just Sord?"

"Sord's the sun," said Link grimly, thinking of something else. "This is the third world from it."

"That's silly!" said the ufft. "What did you come here for, anyway? What did you expect to get out of it?"

"In spite," said Link, "of the remarkable similarity between your interrogation and those of other individuals with equally dubious justification, I merely observe that my motivation is only to be revealed to properly constituted authorities, and refrain from telling you to go fly a kite."

"What's a kite?" asked the ufft.

Link said, "Look! I'm supposed to be hung presently. I disapprove of the idea. How about arranging for me to escape along with Thistlethwaite?"

The ufft said, "Five thousand beers?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I haven't got them," admitted Link.

"Three? Will Old Man Addison pay them for you?"

"I've never met him," said Link.

"What else have you to offer then?" asked the ufft in a business-like tone. "I have to get a commission, of course."

"I made a speech in the ufft city," said Link hopefully, "on the way here from the ship. It was very well received. I may have some — hm — friends among my listeners who would think it unfortunate if I were hanged."

The ufft got to its four feet. It stretched itself. It yawned. Then it said:

"Too bad!"

It trotted out of the hall.

Link found himself angry. In fact, he raged. Thistlethwaite, if he escaped, might actually try to astrogate the *Glamorgan* back to Trent with the help of the careful notes Link had made in the ship's log. It wasn't too likely he'd manage it, but it was possible. If he did, then Link would be dying in vain. He went storming about the building. He hadn't realized it, but it was now near sunset and what of the sky could be seen through windows was a flaming, crimson red. He came upon an ufft sauntering at ease from one room to another, and a second settling down for a tranquil nap. But he saw no human until he blundered into what must be a kitchen. There Thana bustled about in what must once have been a completely electrified kitchen, now equipped with lamps which were simply floating wicks for illumination. There were two retainer-girls assisting her. They used the former equipment as tables, and the cooking was done over a fire of dried-out leaves and twigs.

"Oh," said Thana cordially. "Hello."

"Listen!" said Link. "I want to make a protest!"

"I'm terribly busy," said Thana pleasantly, "and anyhow Harl's the one to tell about anything that's missing in the treatment of a guest. Would you excuse me?"

Link changed his approach.

"I've got an idea," he said rather desperately. "I think I know how to identify the kind of — of salt you want to add to bog-iron to make good knives from your unduplied sample."

"For that," said Thana warmly, "I'll stop cooking! What is it, Link?"

"When you put bog-iron in the duplier," said Link harassedly, "and the duplier makes a knife, the bog-iron crumbles because the iron's been taken away." Link was irritated now. "The idea is to make a series of knives, adding different rock samples to each one, until you get a good knife. Then the rock that contained the alloy-metal you wanted will be crumbled into sand like the iron. See?"

"Wonderful!" said Thana, pleased. "I should have thought of it! I'll try it tomorrow!"

There was a faint noise outside. It was a shrill, ululating sound. Link paid no attention. Instead, he said urgently:

"And I think I can work out some

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ways that might get electricity back!"

"That would be marvelous," said Thana. "You must tell Harl what they are! At dinner, Link. Tell him about them at dinner. He's busy now, arranging about the torchlight for the hanging. But I thank you very kindly for telling me the trick to make better knives. I'm sure it will work, but I really do have to get dinner ready!"

The noise outside grew louder. There were shouts. It sounded like a first-class riot beginning. Thana tilted her head on one side, listening.

"The uffts are putting on a demonstration," she said without particular interest. "Why don't you go watch it. Link? You can tell Harl all your new ideas when we have dinner. I think it's wonderful of you to think of things like this! You've no idea how important it will be!"

She bustled away. Link ground his teeth. If Thistlethwaite escaped, he must, too! Thistlewaite might carry out the bargain with Old Man Addison and try to astrogate back to Trent. The emergency wasn't that he might not make it, but that he might.

Link made his way in the general direction of the tumult. It was dark inside the big building now. A remarkable number of uffts seemed to be racing madly up stairs and down a hallway to the open air. The sound of their hoofs changed as they went out-of-doors. The noises from outside changed as they left the door open behind them. Link had heard only the background noise, a continual shrill yapping, but now he heard individual voices.

"Down with humans!" "Down with the murders of interstellar travellers!" "Uffts forever!" "Men go home!" There was a particularly loud outburst. *"We want freedom! We want freedom!"* Then a squealing from a myriad voices from small piglike throats. *"Yah! Yah! Yah! Men have hands! Yah! Yah! Yah!"*

Link reached the open door. Darkness had fallen with the suddenness only observable in the tropics of some ten thousand planets. It occurred to him that the troop of uffts he heard in the building was probably Thistlethwaite's special rescue-squad. If they'd had to rush past or through a human guard at the doorway, such a guard would now be in poor condition to resist his own exit. And it was dark. There was enough confusion to cover one man —even a man supposed to be hung —while he left the householder's residence.

He was right. Starlight showed hundreds of small, rotund bodies galloping madly up and down the street, shrilling squealed insults at the human race in general and Harl in particular. There was one special focus of tumult. Three men on unicorns were its center. They were apparently Harl's retainers returning from a hunt for an alleged new deposit of bog-iron. They'd been caught in the village street by the suddenly erupting disorder. They were surrounded by uffts, running around them like a merry-go-round, squealing denunciations at the tops of their voices.

"Men have hands! Shame! Shame!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Shame!" "Down with murderers of interstellar travellers!" "Uffts forever!" "Down with men!" "Down!"

Then a unicorn made a misstep. A foot came down on an ufft. The galloping small animal squealed, *"He tramped on me!"* and ran away shrieking its complaint.

The sound of uproar doubled. Link went out into the darkness to escape. He saw torches burning where men were at work building something which was plainly a gallows. Until this instant they had taken the noise and galloping calmly. They'd continued to work, though from time to time they looked with mild interest at the milling, small creatures which raced up and down the street, making all the noise they possibly could.

But the stepped-on, shrieking ufft changed everything. Uffts came swarming more thickly than ever about the mounted men. They seemed to climb over each other to get closer to the unicorns and squeal more ferociously than before.

And the unicorns panicked. Link saw a huge, pillowy forefoot lift with an ufft clinging to it, biting viciously. The ufft let go and bounced off its fellows on the ground. Other uffts bit at the unicorns' feet. One of them went down to its knees and its rider toppled off. All three awkward animals bolted. All three fled crazily from the village with gigantic, splay-footed strides. The man who'd been thrown was buried under squealing uffts, while the greater number of the demonstrators went galloping after the runaway unicorns. The riders of two unicorns tried frantically to control them, but the saddle of the third was quite empty.

Link heard the covered-up man swearing bloodcurdlingly. He found himself plunging toward his fellow human. Quite automatically, his hands grasped two ufftian hind-legs and threw two uffts away over the heads of their fellows. Two more. Two more. Squealings from the thrown uffts seemed suddenly to terrify those who had been most valiant and most vocal in the attack.

Link again threw away two more and two more still — and suddenly the creatures were running insanely in all directions. Some ran between his legs in wild, shrill terror. They jammed that opening and Link went down with a crash, still hanging on to a kicking hind leg. The man he'd come to rescue continued to swear, now without uffts to muffle his words, which were remarkable. And there were men running to the scene with torches.

Link let go of the ufft he held captive. He had to, to get up. The ufft went streaking for the far horizon at the top of his voice. Harl came striding out of the Household, fuming.

"Sput!" he fumed. "Those uffts — they bit through the lashin's of that whiskery man's cage an' let him loose! All this fuss was gettin' him escaped! Sput! I was figurin' on havin' a real spectacular hangin'! An' now he's gone and got away! But there's still—

He stared.

"Link."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

XI

"This," said Link, at once with dignity and with passion, "this is no time to be fooling around with hangings!"

Harl blinked at him in the starlight.

"What's the matter, Link? What you doin' outside the house? That fella got away, but there's—"

"Me," snapped Link. "But you can't spare the time to hang me now! Get some men mounted! We've got to catch Thistlethwaite!"

"We don't know where he went," objected Harl.

"I do!" Link snapped at him. "He went to the ship! If for nothing else, to get some pants! Then he'll go to Old Man Addison's. The uffts'll take him. He'll make a deal with him!"

It was an absurd time and place for an argument. Men with torches lighted one small part of the street. They'd come to help a fellow-human momentarily buried under swarming, squealing uffts. Link had gotten there first. Then Harl. Now Link, with clenched fists, faced Harl in a sort of passionate frustration.

"Don't you see?" he demanded fiercely. "He was on Sord Three last year! He made a deal with Old Man Addison then! He's brought a shipload of unduplied stuff to trade with Old Man Addison for dupliers!"

Harl wrinkled his forehead.

"But that'd be — that wouldn't be mannerly!" he objected. "That'd be — sput, Link, that'd be — business!"

He used the term as if it were one to be used only in strictly private consultation with a physician. As if it were a euphuism for something unspeakable.

"That's exactly what it is!" rasped Link. "Business! And bad business at that! He'll sell the contents of his ship to Old Man Addison and be paid in dupliers! And with the dupliers —"

"Sput!" Harl waved his hands and bellowed, "Everybody out! Big trouble! Everybody out! Bring y'spears!"

There was confusion. Men appeared and ran out of sight. Some of them came back riding unicorns. Some led them. The three animals that had been ringed in and whose tender feet had been bitten by the uffts now came limping back into the village. The two riders had somehow managed to subdue their own beasts, and then had overtaken and caught the riderless animal.

"A unicorn for Link!" roared Harl in what he evidently considered a military manner. "Get him a spear!"

"Hold it!" said Link grimly. "That stun-gun you took from Thistlethwaite! You were carrying it. I'll take that, Harl! I know how to use it!"

"I ain't had time to figure it out," said Harl, agreeing. He roared. "Get that funny dinkus the whiskery man was carryin' this mornin'! Give it to Link!"

Link said grimly, "Old Man Addison is going to pay three thousand bottles of beer for Thistlethwaite's delivery to him. It's a written contract. Thistlethwaite wouldn't promise anything like that if he didn't

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

know his value to Old Man Addison!"

Harl shook his head.

"You wouldn't like Old Man Addison," he said sagely. "He's hardly got any more manners than a ufft. Anybody who's mannerly like you are couldn't get along with him, Link. You showed sense in stayin' with me."

"To be hanged!" said Link bitterly.

"Hold on!" said Harl in astonishment. "Didn't I admire that shirt o' yours! An' didn't I accept it as a gift? I could make a gift to a man I was goin' to hang, Link. That'd be just manners! But I couldn't accept a gift an' then hang him! That'd be disgraceful!" He paused and said in an injured tone, "I've heard of Old Man Addison doin' things like that, but I never thought anybody'd suspect it of me."

Link waved his hand impatiently. It was remarkable that the discovery that plans for his hanging were changed should make so little difference in his thinking. "I doubt," he said, "that we'd better go through the ufft city. We'd better circle it. We'd be delayed at best, and Thistlethwaite is in a hurry to settle his bargain with Old Man Addison. He'll hurry."

At least an hour after their starting-out a high, shrill clamor set up, very far away.

"That's uffts," said Harl. "Somethin's happened an' they feel all happy an' excited."

"It's Thistlethwaite," said Harl. "He got to the ship. He probably passed out some gifts to the uffts."

The cavalcade went on. The faint shrill clamor continued.

"Uh, Link," said Harl, in a tone at once apologetic and depressed, "I thought of somethin' that might make the uffts feel good. If like you said he gave presents to the uffts, maybe it was unduplied things. They couldn't use 'em, havin' hoofs instead of hands, but they'd know us humans 'ud have to buy 'em. They like to bargain. They enjoy makin' humans pay too much. It makes 'em feel smart and superior. He could ha' made a lot of trouble for us humans! A lot o' trouble!"

The long, lumpy line of men and animals went on through the darkness. Harl said unhappily:

"The uffts were tryin' to make me pay 'em for news of where there was a lot of bog-iron. You figure what they'd make me pay for somethin' unduplied! If that fella's passin' out that kinda gifts, the uffts'll feel swell. But I don't!"

Link said nothing. It would be reasonable for Thistlethwaite to feel that he had to get samples of his cargo aground to ensure his deal with Old Man Addison, and then to have a train of armed men and animals come to unload the *Glamorgan* and carry its specially purchased cargo away. If he opened a cargo compartment to get samples, the uffts could well have demanded samples for themselves. Or they could simply take them.

"And," Harl fumed, "when they got something they'll ask fifty bottles of beer for, they won't bother bringin' in greenstuff, and how'll I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

get the beer to pay 'em? They'll bring in knives an' cloth and demand beer! And if I don't have the beer, they'll take the stuff to another Household."

"Then you'll have to pay it."

"Without greenstuff, I can't," said Harl bitterly.

There was an addition to the faint, joyous clamor beyond the horizon. Link began to discount any chance of success in this expedition. If Harl was right, Thistlethwaite had gotten to the ship, had gotten more clothing and had very probably passed out, in lieu of cash or beer, such objects of *virtu* as mirrors, cosmetics, cooking-pots made of other metals than iron, crockery, small electric appliances like flashlights, pens, pencils and synthetic fabrics. None of these things could be duplied on Sord Three, because the minerals required as raw materials had been forgotten if they were ever known.

And all this would put Harl in a bad situation, no doubt. Every Householder would need to deal with Old Man Addison for such trinkets, which he must supply to his retainers or seem less than a desirable feudal superior. But to Link the grim fact was that Thistlethwaite must have gotten to the ship before the mounted party. If he suspected he'd waste no time. He'd go on. And if he had gone on...

Dead ahead, now, there were peculiar small sounds. It took Link seconds to realize that it was the hoofs of uffts on metal stair treads and metal floors, the sound coming out of an opened exit port.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Harl," said Link in a low tone, "Thistlethwaite may still be in the ship. There are certainly plenty of uffts rummaging around in there! Can you get your men—"

But Harl did not wait for advice. He raised his voice:

"There they are, boys!" he bellowed. "Come along an' get 'em! Get the whiskery fella! If we don't get him there'll be no hangin' tonight!"

Roaring impressively, he urged his awkward mount forward. He was followed by all his undisciplined troop. It was a wild and furious and completely confused charge. Link and Harl led it, of course. They topped a natural rise in the ground and saw the tall shape of the *Glamorgan* against the stars.

There was a wild stirring of what seemed to be hordes of uffts, clustered about the exit port and swarming in and swarming out again. A light inside the port cast an inadequate glow outside and in that dim light rotund, piglike shapes could be seen squirming and struggling to get into the ship, if they were outside, or to get out if they happened to be in. Link saw the glitter of that light upon metal. Evidently the uffts were making free with at least the contents of one cargo compartment. They were bringing out what small objects they could carry.

Harl bellowed again, and his followers dutifully yelled behind him, and the whole pack of them went sweeping over the hillcrest and down upon the aggregation of uffts. The unicorns were apparently blessed with good night vision, because none of them fell among the boulders that strewed the hillside.

The charge was discovered. Squeals and squeaks of alarm came from the uffts. It was not as much of a tumult as so many small creatures should make, however. Those with aluminum pots and pans, or kitchen appliances, or small tools or other booty — those of them with objects carried in their mouths simply bolted off into the dark, making no outcry because it would have made them drop their loot. Link saw one of them with an especially large pot dive into it and roll over, and pick it up again and run ten paces and then trip and dive into it again before it found a way to hold the pot safely and go galloping madly away.

The other uffts scattered. But there were boulders here. They shrilled defiant slogans from behind them. *"Down with men!" "Uffts forever!"* They yapped at the men on their unicorns. So far as combat was concerned, however, the charge on the spaceship was anticlimactic. The uffts outside either fled with whatever they'd picked up in their teeth, or scattered to abuse the men from lurking places among the bouders all round about. But there were very many more inside the ship. They came streaming out in a struggling, squabbling flood. The riders did not try to stop them. They seemed satisfied and even pleased with themselves over the panicky flight of the uffts. They clustered about the exit port, but they allowed the uffts through as they fled.

"What'll we do now?" asked Harl.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"See if Thistlethwaite's inside," said Link curtly.

He got the stun-gun ready.

There'd been no effort by any of the riders to use their spears on the uffts. Link could understand it. Uffts talked. And a man can kill a dangerous animal, or even a merely annoying one, but it would seem like murder to use deadly weapon on a creature which was apparently incapable of anything more dangerous than nipping at a unicorn's foot or tearing the clothes of a man buried under a squealing heap of them. A man simply wouldn't think of killing a talking animal which couldn't harm him save by abuse.

Harl swung from his saddle and strode inside the ship. Link heard him climb the metal stairs inside. There was a wild squealing sound, and something came falling down the steps with a wild clatter as of tinware. An ufft rolled out of the door and streaked for the horizon, squealing.

There were more yellings.

"Down with murderers of interstellar travellers!" squeaked an invisible ufft somewhere nearby. "Men have hands! Shame! Shame! Shame!" yapped another. Then a chorus set up, "Men go home! Men go home! Men go home!"

The men on the unicorns seemed to grow uneasy. They were bunched around the exit port of the ship, with very many uffts concealed nearby making a racket of abuse. Sometimes they shouted whatever competing outcries caught their fancy, as in the rhythmic, "Men go home!" effort. Then there was merely a wild clamor until some specially strident voice began a more catchy insult.

There were thumpings inside the ship. Harl bellowed somewhere. More thumpings. The yellings of abuse grew louder and louder. Apparently the burdenless uffts had ceased to flee when they found themselves not pursued. The torrent of insult became deafening. At the very farthest limit of the light from the port round bodies could be seen, running among the boulders as they yelled epithets.

The riders stirred apprehensively. The military tactics of the uffts consisted of derogatory outcries for moral effect and the biting of unicorns' feet as direct attack. Agitated running in circles had prefaced the attack on three unicorns, most tender parts in the village street. The riders in the starlight, here, were held immobile because Harl was inside the ship. But they showed disturbance at the prospect of another such attack on their mounts. More, there came encouraging, bloodthirsty cries from across the hilltop, as if a war party from the ufft city were on the way to reinforce the uffts making a tumult about the ship.

Footsteps. Two pairs of them. Harl came out the exit port, very angry, with a woebegone retainer following him.

"This fella," said Harl, fuming, "is the one I left to watch the ship for you, Link. The whiskery fella came here with a crowd of uffts. He hadn't any clothes on and he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

told this fella he'd got in trouble and needed to get his clothes. The fella thought it was only mannerly to let a man have his own clothes, so he let him in. An' then the whiskery fella hit him from behind with somethin', an' locked him in a cabin an' let the uffts in."

Link said curtly, "Too bad, but—"

"We'd better get movin'," said Harl regretfully. "We missed him. He musta got away before we found it out. He opened up a door somewheres, this fella says, and he heard him cussin' the uffts like they were just takin' anything they could close their teeth on. Then he heard some noise—"

An ufft leaped a boulder and darted at the uneasily stamping unicorns. He hadn't quite the nerve to make it all the way, and swerved back; but other uffts made similar short rushes. Presently there'd be one underfoot, nipping at the animals' feet, and they'd stampede.

"We'd better get movin'," said Harl uneasily. "They're gettin" nervy."

"No," said Link grimly. "Wait a minute!"

He swung the stun-gun around. He opened the cone-of-fire aperture. He adjusted the intensity-of-shock stud. He raised it. The yells were truly deafening. "Scoundrels!" "Villains!" yapped the racing, jumping small creatures.

Link pulled the trigger. The stun-gun made a burping noise. Electric charges sped out of it, scattering. The gun would carry nearly a hundred yards at widest dispersion of its fire. Within the cone-shaped space it affected, any flesh unshielded by metal would receive a sharp and painful but totally uninjurious electric shock. To men who knew nothing of electricity it would have been startling. To uffts it would be unparalleled and utterly horrifying. They squealed.

Link fired it again, at another area in the darkness. Shrieks of ufftian terror rose to the stars.

"Murderers!" cried ufft voices. "Murderers! You're killing us!"

Link aimed at the voices and fired again, twice.

The uffts around the spaceship went away from there, making an hysterical outcry in which complaints that the complainer had been killed were only drowned out by louder squealings to the effect the squealers were dead.

"Sput!" said Harl, astounded. "What're you doin', Link? You ain't killin' 'em, are you? I need 'em to bring in greenstuff!"

"They'll live," said Link. "Wait here. I want to see what Thistlethwaite did. Anyhow he didn't try to lift the ship off to Old Man Addison's Household!"

He went in and climbed the stairway. He saw a cargo-compartment door that once had been sealed and was now welded shut. Thistlethwaite had used an oxygen-torch on it.

A second cargo-door: welded shut. The third door was open. It was apparently the compartment from which the loot of the uffts had come. It appeared to be empty. The engine-room door was welded shut, and the spaceboat blister. The con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trol-room was sealed off from any entry by anybody without at least a cold-chisel, but preferably a torch. And the oxygen torch was gone.

Link went down the stairs again, muttering. Thistlethwaite had made the *Glamorgan* useless to anybody possessing neither a cold-chisel nor an oxygen torch. Harl couldn't seize the materials Thistlethwaite planned to trade for dupliers.

Old Man Addison might yet get his goods.

In the one gutted cargo-space he looked into it again with no hope at all—he found a plastic can of beans, toppled on the floor. He picked it up. It was too large for the jaws of uffts to grasp.

He went down to the exit-port again, piously turning out the electric lights that Thistlethwaite had left burning. He was deeply and savagely disappointed. He was almost at the exit port when an idea came to him. He climbed back up and touched the bottom-most weld. It scorched his fingers. Thistlethwaite hadn't done it long ago. He couldn't be far off.

Link turned on the lights again and searched. The only loose object left anywhere was an open can of seal-off compound, for stopping air-leaks such as the *Glamorgan* had a habit developing.

It was black and tarry and even an ufft would not want it. But Link did.

He reached the open air again. He said briefly, "Hold this, Harl."

He handed over the container of beans and worked on the landing fin in which the exit port existed. He had only the narrow bristle brush used to apply the seal-off compound, and only the compound to apply. The light was starlight alone. But when he'd finished he read the straggling letters of the message with some satisfaction. It read:

Thistlethwaite:

Householders delighted with test of weapon to make uffts work without pay. Lead your gang into ambush as planned for large scale use of weapon. Watch out for Link. He is pro-ufft and secretly an ufft sympathizer.

"What'd you do, Link?" demanded Harl. "What's that writing for?"

"That writing," said Link, "is to end the Thistlethwaite problem on Sord Three."

The cavalcade set out upon its long, shambling return journey underneath the stars. The trip was without incident, save that very occasionally very brave uffts squealed insults from not less than half a mile away—and then fled still farther from the shambling line of mounts and men. Then eventually the houses of the village loomed up on either side.

Thana welcomed Harl and Link, but she was inclined to be distressed that their dinner now had to be warmed over and was inferior in quality for that reason. They dined. Link presented Thana with the plastic can of beans. Harl asked what they were. When Link told him, he said absorbedly:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I've heard that there's a Household over past Old Man Addison that has beans, but I never tasted 'em myself. We'll duply some an' have 'em for breakfast. Right?"

And Link was ushered into a guest room, with a light consisting of a wick floating in a dish of oil.

He slept soundly until an hour after sunrise. Then he was waked by the sound of shoutings. He could see nothing from his window, so he dressed and went leisurely to see from the street.

There were many villagers out of doors, staring at the distance. From time to time they shouted encouragement. Link saw what they shouted at.

A small, hairy figure, chastely clad in a red-checked table-cloth around his middle, ran madly toward th Household. The figure was Thistlethwaite. The red-checked cloth had once been draped over a table in the *Glamorgan's* mess-room. Thistlethwaite ran like a deer, and behind him came uffts yapping insults and trying to nip his heels.

He reached safety and the uffts drew off, shouting "Traitor!" and "Murderer!" as the mildest of accusations. Now and then one roared shrilly at him, "*Agent provocateur!*"

XII

The situation developed in a strictly logical fashion. The uffts remained at a distance, shouting insults and abuse at all the humans in the village which was Harl's Household. Hours passed. No small, ufft-drawn carts came in bringing loads of roots, barks, herbs, berries, blossoms and flowers. Normally they were brought in for the duplier to convert in part to beer — with added moisture — and in part into such items as slightly wormy apples, legumes like peas, and discouraged succulents like lettuce. There were all sorts of foodstuffs duplied with the same ufft-cart loads of material, of course. Wheat, and even flour, could be synthesized by the duplier from the assorted compounds in the vegetation the carts contained. Radishes could be multiplied. Every product of Thana's garden could be increased indefinitely.

But this morning no raw material for beer or victuals appeared, and the uffts remained at a distance shrilling insults.

Thistlethwaite revealed the background events behind this development. He'd escaped from the Household, surrounded by a scurrying guard of uffts, while the political demonstration in the street was at its height. That tumult continued while he was hurried to the ufft city. There he was feted, but not fed. The uffts did not make use of human food. They were herbivorous and had no provisions for him. But they did make speeches about his escape,

He stood it so long but he was a business man. He wanted food and he wanted clothing and he wanted to get to Old Man Addison's Household to proceed with his business deal to end all business deals. But he insisted on being taken first to the *Glamorgan* for food and clothing. He spoke with pride of his talent for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

business. The uffts mentioned, as businessmen, that the contract for his rescue and escort did not include food, clothing or a trip west of the ufft city. There would be a slight extra charge. He was indignant, but he agreed.

He'd been taken to the ship. The watchman left by Harl admitted him. He overpowered that watchman and put him in a cabin for crew members. He stuffed himself, because food was more urgent than clothing. He admitted uffts, because they were clamoring below. They wanted the extra fees they'd charged him. They announced that they were not interested in human artifacts. They wanted the usual currency — beer. The whiskery man didn't have it. They suggested that they would accept cargo at a proper discount. Since they'd have to trade human goods to humans for the beer they preferred, the discount would be great.

Thistlethwaite had to yield, though he raged. He opened a cargo-compartment and the uffts began to empty it. Thistlethwaite wept with fury because circumstances had put him at the mercy of the uffts. In business matters they were businesslike. They didn't have any mercy. He was expressing his indignation at their attitude when they spoke of demurrage to be paid for the delay he was causing. Strangling upon his wrath, he took measures.

He was still taking measures when the expedition of men and unicorns charged down into the hollow where the *Glamorgan* rested. Thistlethwaite got out among the first, and was well away before the stun-gun was put into use. And then, back in the ufft city, the uffts demanded compensation for the injury of an exaggerated number of their fellows in his employ.

Telling about it later, even returned to Harl's Household and presumably the prospect of being hanged, even later Thistlethwaite purpled with fury over the ufft demands. They'd have stripped him of all the *Glamorgan's* cargo if not the ship itself, and he'd have reached Old Man Addison without a smidgin of trade goods with which to deal. His entire journey would have been in vain. It was even unlikely that Old Man Addison would pay for his delivery, when he had nothing to offer that feudal chieftain in the way of trade.

Listening to the account, Harl said sagely:

"Uffs haven't got any manners. You shoulda known better than to deal with them! You did right to come back." Then something occurred to him. "Why'd they chase you?"

Thistlethwaite turned burning, bloodshot eyes upon Link.

"Somebody," he said balefully, "painted a note on the *Glamorgan's* fin. It was addressed to me! So the uffts read it an' it said I'd brought guns for Householders to use on uffts to make 'em work for free! And the note said for me to lead the uffts into a ambush as previous arranged so's they'd get shot up! So they decided that me gettin' put in a cage an' gettin' them to escape me

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was a trick so's you'd get a chance to try out that stun-gun on 'em last night!"

Link said mildly, "Now, I wonder who could have done such a thing!"

Thistlethwaite strangled on his fury. He was speechless.

Said Link with the same mildness, "It begins to look like the uffts are really wrought up. I doubt that they're hanging around the Household just for the pleasure of calling us names. What do you think they want, Harl?"

"Plenty!" said Harl gloomily.

Said Link, "I suggest that you find out."

"Might as well," said Harl, more gloomily still. "If they don't bring in greenstuff, we don't eat. You can't duply what Thana grows unless you've got something to duply it with!"

Link went in search of Thana and found her ruefully regarding the plants in her kitchen garden.

"There's not been an ufft-cart of greenstuff come in today!" she told Link unhappily. "And the uffts are shouting such bad language I don't know when they'll start bringing carts in again!"

"You've got food stored ahead?" asked Link.

"Not much," admitted Thana. "The uffts always bring in greenstuff, so there's been no need to store food."

Link shook his head.

"It looks bad," he observed. "Will you duply that gun I used last night and see if it works? It might be a solution to the problem. An unwelcome solution, but perhaps a necessary solution."

"Of course!" said Thana.

She led the way — to the great hall and across it, and into the room with innumerable shelves that served the purpose of a treasury. She lifted down the stun-gun from a high shelf which Link realized no uffts with hoofs instead of hands could ever climb to. She gave Link some large lumps of bog-iron, and brought out a ready-cut billet of wood.

In the great hall again, she pressed a button and the chair of state and its dais rose ceilingward. When the duplier came up out of the pit, Thana put the bog-iron and the wood in the raw-material hopper. She put the stun-gun in the hopper holding the object to be duplicated, and she left the third hopper empty. The duplicate should of course appear there.

She pressed the button. The duplier descended, the chair of state came down. She pressed the button again. The chair of state went up and the duplier arose. The bog-iron in the first hopper was visibly diminished and there was much sand on the hopper bottom. The sample, authentic, original stun-gun remained where it had been placed, in the middle hopper. But a seemingly exact duplicate remained in the last hopper.

Link took the duplied object. He examined it. He aimed it skyward and pulled the trigger. Nothing happened, not even the slight hiccough which accompanies a stun-gun's operation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He twisted the disassembly screw and the gun opened up for inspection. Link looked, and shook his head.

"No transistors," he reported regretfully. "They're made of germanium and stuff — rare metals at the best of times. We haven't any. So the gun is incomplete. A duplied stun-gun needs germanium and without it it's no good, just like a duplied knife. No dice. I'm very glad of it."

Harl came in, indignant.

"Link!" he said in a tone expressing shock at something appalling and outrage at something crushing. "I sent a coupla fellas to find out what the uffts wanted, and the uffts chased 'em back!"

"Did they mention their reason?" asked Link.

"They yelled I was a conspirator. They yelled that the whiskery man was goin' to lead 'em into a ambush last night to be massacred. They yelled I was goin' to try to make 'em work all the time without payin' 'em beer! They yelled down with me. Me!" said Harl incredulously. "They said they were makin' a general strike against me! No greenstuff! No carrying messages from me to anywhere! No anything! I got to get rid of the thing they say killed 'em by hundreds last night — Did it kill 'em, Link?"

"Not a one," said Link. "They got stung a bit, but that's all. Nothing worse than a sting for the fraction of a second."

"They say," finished Harl astonishedly, "that the strike keeps up till I hang the whiskery fella and get rid of the gun that was used on 'em, an' let uffts search the whole Household to see if there are any more — an' repeat that search any time they please! They got to read all messages to me from anybody else, and from me to anybody! And I got to give 'em four more bottles of beer for each cartload of greenstuff they bring in from now on!"

Link considered for a moment. Then he said, "What have you decided?"

"I couldn't if I wanted to!" said Harl. "Sput, Link, if I hung that whiskery fella because the uffts wanted it, I'd be disgraced. Not a fella in the Household would stay here! If I left the uffts search anybody's house any time they wanted not a woman would let her husband stay! If I agreed to all that, Link, there wouldn't be a livin' soul here by sundown!"

Link somehow felt relieved. The human economy here on Sord Three had defects, even to his tolerant eyes. The humans were utterly dependent upon the uffts for the food they ate and the clothes they wore, in the sense that they depended on ufft-cart loads of raw material. At any time the uffts could shut down and starve out a human household. It was a relief to discover that humans would not submit.

"What'll you do?"

"Send a messenger to my next neighbor," said Harl angrily. "I'll say I'm comin' guestin'. I'll take half a dozen men an' forty or fifty unicorns. When I get to his household I'll make him a guest gift of a duplied new shirt an' a duplied can of beans. Then he can have all the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shirts an' beans he wants from now on. That's a right grand gift, Link. So he'll be anxious to make a mannerly host-gift to me. So I'll admire how much ready-duplied food he has stored away. So he'll duply enough food to load up my train of unicorns and I'll bring it back here!"

"And then what? Suppose the uffts stage a political demonstration in the street while you're gone?"

Harl scowled. "They better not!" he said darkly. "They — uh — they'd better not . . . I'll go send my messenger."

He hurried away.

Thana said, "You don't think that's going to work out."

"It might," said Link. "But it needn't." Thana said in a practical tone of voice, "Let's see what we can do with that unduplied knife, Link."

She went into the room Link considered the Household treasury. She came back with the alloy-steel knife, of which duplied copies so far had been only soft iron, and her collection of variegated rocks.

She duplied the knife with bog-iron alone in the raw-materials hopper. The contrivance went down in the pit, the canopied chair descended and covered the pit, then rose again and the contrivance came up once more. There was a second knife in the products hopper. She handed it to Link.

Its edge turned immediately: soft iron. He handed it back. She cleaned out the materials hopper of sand and bog-iron, and put the just-duplied soft-iron knife in for raw material. She added a dozen of the rocks of which some might be ores.

The duplier descended and rose. The knife had again been duplied. Its edge was still useless. The duplier had not been able to extract from the rock-samples the alloying elements the original knife contained in addition to iron, and which a true duplicate would have to contain. They weren't in the rocks. Thana cleared out the useless rock specimens with a professional air.

"I'm afraid you're right, Link, about the uffts."

"How?" asked Link.

"Harl thinks about manners all the time. He's not practical, like you."

"I've never been accused of being practical before," said Link drily.

Thana put the re-duplied knife in the materials hopper. She added more rocks. When the chair descended she said:

"What did you do with yourself before you came here, Link?"

"Oh I went hither and yon," said Link, "and did this and that."

The chair rose and the duplier reappeared. The new knife also was soft iron. Thana cleared away these unsatisfactory rock samples also. She shifted the soft-iron knife to the first hopper and put in more pebbles. When the duplier went down and came up again, the re-re-duplied knife had vanished from the materials hopper and reappeared in the third hopper where duplied products did appear. There was no crumbling among the pebbles which might be ores. She replaced them with still others and the duplication cycle began again.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Where's your home, Link?"

"Anywhere," said Link. He watched the duplier descend and the chair-of-state come down to cover the pit. It rose again to disclose a re-re-duplicated knife. This time too, the edge was not good. She substituted still other pebbles and sent the duplier down to do its duplying all over again.

"Where's anywhere?" asked Thana, looking at him intently.

XIII

He told her. As the duplier went through the process of making and re-making the knife according to the provided sample, but without the alloy-material that would turn it to steel, he answered seemingly idle questions and presently was more or less sketching out the story of his life. He told her about Glaeth. He told her about his two years at the Merchant Space Academy on Malibu. He found himself saying, "That's where I met Imogene."

"Your girl friend?" asked Thana with possibly exaggerated casualness.

"No," said Link. "Oh, for a while I suppose you'd say she was. I wanted to marry her. I don't know why. It seemed like a good idea at the time . . . But she asked me business-like questions about did I have any property anywhere and what were my prospects, and so on. She said we were congenial enough, but marriage was a girl's career and one had to know all the facts before deciding anything so important. Very pretty girl, though," said Link.

Thana removed the assortment of stones that still again had been proved to contain no metalliferous steel-hardening alloy. She put in more. Among the ones to be tested this time there was a sample of a peach-colored rock Link had noted earlier as familiar. Link stiffened for a moment. Then he reached inside his shirt and into a pocket of his stake belt. By feeling only, he selected a small, gritty crystal and placed it beside the sample knife.

The dais and the chair-of-state descended. He waited for it to rise up again.

"What happened?" asked Thana. Again she was unconvincingly casual.

"Oh," said Link, "I went back to where I was lodging and counted up my assets. I'd been toying with the idea of going to Glaeth to get rich. I had enough for that and about two thousand credits over. So I bought the necessary tickets and stuff, and reserved a place on a spaceship leaving that afternoon. Then I went to a florist."

Thana said blankly, "Why?"

"I wanted to put her on ice."

The duplier came up. An irregular lump of grayish-black rock had visibly disintegrated. It was not all gone, but a good tenth of its substance had disappeared. There were glittering scales to prove its crumbling. The peach-colored stone had dropped a fine dust, too.

"This looks promising!" said Link.

He tested the edge of the duplied knife. It was excellent; equivalent to the original.

It should have been. Tungsten

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

steel does take a good edge, and hold it, too. He handed the knife to Thana, and fumbled in the bottom of the product hopper. There was a small, very bright crystal there. He picked it up, together with the other sample crystal from his stake-belt.

Very, very calmly he put two gritty crystals into the stake-belt pocket from which he'd extracted one. Thana held the duplied but this time tungsten-steel knife. She should have been enraptured. But instead she asked urgently: "Why did you go to a florist?"

"I bought two thousand credits worth of flowers," said Link. "I ordered them delivered to Imogene. They'd fill every room in her parents' home with some left over to hang out the windows. I wrote a note with them, bidding her goodbye."

Thana stared at him with a remarkable amount of interest.

"She wanted a rich husband and I hated to disappoint her," he explained. "And also, there was a chance that I might get rich on Glaeth. So I told her in my note that my multi-millionaire father had consented for me to roam the galaxy until I could find a girl who would love me for myself alone, not knowing of his millions. And I'd found her. And she was the only woman I could ever love. It was a fairly long note," Link added.

"But — but — "

"I said I was going away for a year to see if I could live without her. If I couldn't — even though she considered my father's millions — I'd come back and sadly ask her to marry me though my father's millions counted. If I could, I said, I'd spend the rest of my life exploring strange planets and brooding because the one woman I could love could not love me for myself, as I loved her. A very nice piece of romantic literature."

Thana said blankly, "Then what?"

Harl appeared for the second time in the doorway. He was enraged. His hands were clenched. He scowled formidably.

"They wouldn't let my fella ride through," he said in an ominous tone. "They bit his unicorn's heels. They'd ha' pulled it down and him too! So he came back. Uffts never dared try a trick like that before! Not in this Household! An' they never will again!"

"What —"

"I'm goin' to duply that gun you used last night, Link," said Harl ferociously, "and me and a bunch of my fellas will go out an' sting them up like you did, only plenty. When uffts say a man's got to be hung and a householder can't send a message, that ain't just no-manners. That's — that's —"

He stopped, at a loss for a word to express behavior more reprehensible than bad manners. Link noted that on Sord Three 'manners' had come to imply all that was admirable, as in other places and other times words like "honor" and "intellectual" and "piety" and "patriotic" had become synonyms for "good." And, as those other cases, something was missing. But he said:

"Thana and I already tried duply-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing it, Harl. The duplied one doesn't work — just as duplied knives don't hold an edge."

Harl stared at him.

"Sput! Y'sure?"

"Quite sure," said Link. "We solved the problem of the knife, but the raw material to make a duplied stun-gun is rare everywhere. We haven't got it and I wouldn't know it if I saw it."

Harl said "Sput!" again, and began to pace up and down. After a minute and more he said bitterly:

"I'm not goin' to let my Household starve! So far's I know no man has ever killed a ufft in a hundred years. They act crazy, but they can't hold a spear to fight with, even if they could make 'em. So it'd be a disgrace to use a spear on them. But it'd be a disgrace to hang a man just because the uffts wanted him hung! And to let 'em search our houses any time they felt like it, just because they can't fight! Anyhow I'm not goin' to let my household go hungry because uffts say they've got to!"

He stamped his feet, ground his teeth and started for the doorway. Link said:

"Hold it, Harl! I've got an idea. You don't want to use spears on uffts."

"I got to!"

"No. And if you use the only stun-gun on the planet, it'll make them madder than ever."

"Can I help that?"

"You don't even want them to stop trading with your Household, greenstuff for beer."

"I want," said Harl savagely, "for things to be like they was in the old days, when the old folks were polite to the uffts and the uffts to them! When humans didn't need uffts and tools were good and knives were sharp —"

"And everybody had beans for breakfast," Link finished for him. "But I've got an idea, Harl. Uffts like speeches."

Harl scowled at him.

"They like my speeches," added Link.

Harl's scowl did not diminish.

"I," said Link, "will go out and make a speech to them. If they won't listen, I'll hightail it back. But if they do listen I'll gather them in a splendid public meeting to discuss work hours and fringe benefits or something like that. I'll organize them into committees. Then I'll adjourn them to a more convenient place."

Harl said cagily, "Then what?"

"They'll have adjourned away from any place near your Household, and you and your forty or fifty unicorns can go guesting and come back with your food. And," said Link, "meanwhile the uffts will be talking. And talking is thirsty work. That will be an urge toward negotiations by which the uffts can get themselves some beer."

Harl continued to frown, but not as deeply. After a time he said heavily:

"It might fix things for now. But things are bad, Link, an' they keep gettin' worse. This'd be only for right now . . ."

"Ah!" said Link briskly. "Just

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what I was coming to! In your guesting, Harl, you will talk to your hosts about the good old days. You'll point out how superior they were to now. You'll propose an assembly of Householders to organize for the bringing back of the Good Old Days. That, all by itself, is a complete program for a political party of wide and popular appeal!"

"Mmmmmmh!" said Harl slowly. "It's about time somebody started that!"

"Just so," said Link. "So if Thana will fix me up a light lunch — the uffts had no food for Thistlethwaite to eat — I'll go out and try a little silver-tongued oratory. With all due modesty, I think I can sway a crowd. — Of uffts."

Harl's frown was not wholly gone, yet. But he said, "I like that idea of goin' back to the good old days."

"If you're allowed to define them," agreed Link. "But in the meantime we'll let the uffts talk themselves thirsty so they'll have to bring in greenstuff to get beer to lubricate more talk."

Harl said, very heavily indeed:

"We'll try it. You got words, Link. I'll get you a unicorn ready. That's a good idea about the good old days."

He disappeared. Thana said, "You didn't finish telling me about Imogene."

"Oh, she must be married to somebody else by now," Link told her. "I'd wonder if she wasn't.

"I'll fix you a lunch," said Thana. "I think you're going to accomplish a lot on Sord Three, Link!"

He looked startled.

"Why?"

"You," said Thana, "look at such things in a practical way!"

She vanished in her turn. Link spread out his hands in a gesture there was nobody around to see. He heard a faint, faint noise. He pricked up his ears. He went to an open door and listened. A shrill ululation came from somewhere beyond the village. It was the high-pitched voices of uffts. A ryhthm established itself. The uffts were chanting:

"Death - to - men! Death - to men! Death - to - men . . . "

XIV

An hour later, Link went streaking away from the Household, urging his unicorn to the utmost, while Harl led shouts of anger and irritation among the houses. Another rider came after Link. His mount had been carefully selected, and it had no chance at all of overtaking Link. Then came two other riders, one shortly after another, and then a knot of nearly a dozen, as if pursuit of Link had begun as fast as men could get unicorns saddled for the chase. They rushed after Link with seeming fury. But he had a faster mount; a distinctly, pre-arrangedly faster animal.

But it was not the most comfortable of all animals to ride. Unicorns jolted. They put down their large and tender feet with lavish and ungainly motions, the object of which seemed to be to shake their riders' livers loose. The faster they traveled, the more lavish the leg motions and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the more violent the jarring of the man riding them. The drooping fleshy appendages which dangled from their foreheads flapped and bumped as they ran.

Link's pursurers seemed to strive desperately to overtake him. They shook fists and spears at him as he increased his lead. He topped a hillside half a mile from the Household and went down its farther slope. Squealed insults from uffts' throats seemed to give the Household posse pause. When Link was out of sight the voices of invisible uffts hurled epithets at his pursuers. The chase party slackened speed and finally halted. They seemed to confer. Uffts shouted at them. "*Murderers!*" was a mild word. "*Assassins!*" was more frequent. "*Shame! Shame! Shame!*" was commonplace.

The men from the Household, as if reluctantly, turned their mounts homeward, and uffts came scuttling across the uneven ground to shout, "*Cowards!*" after them, and more elaborately, "*Scared to fight! Yah! Yah! yah!*" As the riders pressed their mounts, the uffts became more daring. Rotund small animals almost caught up with the retreating spearbearers, yapping at their unicorns' heels and shouting every insult an ufftish mind could conceive.

When the mounted men reentered the village, however, the uffts went racing and bounding to see what had happened to Link. The painted message on the *Glamorgan's* fin had represented him as pro-ufft, while Thistlethwaite was represented as having villainous intentions toward them. And Link had made them a noble speech, presenting a problem that could be argued about indefinitely. The important thing, though, was that he had fled from the Household, with pursuers hot on his trail. If the humans of the Household disliked him enough to chase him, uffts were practically ready to make him an honorary member of their race.

He kept up his headlong flight for a full mile. Then he gradually slackened speed, as repeated glances to the rear showed no sign of his pursuers. Presently he ceased altogether to urge the unicorn he rode, and proceeded at a leisurely, bumpy walk.

He became aware that uffts trotted or galloped on parallel courses to see what he would do. At first they did not show themselves, and he only caught fugitive glimpses of one or two at a time. But there were evidently some hundreds of them, staying out of sight but keeping pace wih him on either side.

He reined in and waited.

Uffts' voice murmured. There were even squabblings in low tones, as if uffts behind boulders and just behind hilltops were arguing with each other over who should go out into plain view and open a conversation. The buzzing voices became almost angry. Then Link let his unicorn move very slowly to one side while voices mumbled indignantly, "*Who's afraid of him? . . . You are, that's who . . . That's a lie! You're the scared one! . . . Then if you aren't scared, go out and talk to him! . . . You do it! . . . Huh! I*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dare you to go out and talk to him! . . . But I double-dare you . . . I triple-dare you — I quadruple-dare you . . ."

Then Link's head appeared above a hilltop, and the uffts knew that he could see a close-packed mass of them trying to insult each other into making the first contact with him.

"My friends!" said Link in a carrying voice. "I put myself in your hands! I ask political asylum from the Householders and tyrants who are your enemies no less than the enemies of every person in favor of your being favored!"

Every ufft gazed at him. Those nearest him tended to look scared. But Link waved his arms splendidly while he passed from mere flattery to exhortation, and from exhortation to the outlining of a plan of action. He didn't like to disappoint anybody, and the uffts were capable of disappointment.

A part of his mind said wrily that he was making a fool of himself when all he needed was to get the uffts to move off so Harl could get away with a pack train of unicorns and return with some unicorn-loads of groceries. But another part of his mind went on grandly, not disappointing the uffts.

"...your revolution," he told them eloquently, "has the sympathy of every lover of liberty, of licence and of uffts! I look to see the spontaneous uprising you have already made become the pattern for a planet-wide defiance! I look to see committees formed for correspondence with uffts on all this world! A committee to coordinate the publicity which will draw all uffts to your standards! I look to see committees for the organization of revolutionary units! Every talent possessed by uffts must be thrown into the struggle! Why not a committee of poets, to phrase in deathless words the aspirations of the ufftian race? My friends, I ask you! Who favors a committee of correspondence, to inform the whole planet of your intolerable grievances! Who favors it?"

There was some cheering. Nearby uffts cheered raggedly. Those farther away cheered because those nearer cheered. These quite beyond the reach of Link's voice cheered because there was cheering going on. But those far-away ones were not following developments closely. A more - than - usually - fanatical ufft cried shrilly, *"Death to all humans!"*

"Splendid!" shouted Link valorously. "Now, who favors a committee to form revolutionary units for the liberation of the uffts?"

Those nearby cheered more loudly. Again, from the fringes of the gathering, there came bloodthirsty outcries.

"The ayes have it!" Link cried triumphantly. "Who's for a propaganda organization to stimulate the patriotism and the resolution of all uffts everywhere?"

There were more cheers.

"Who volunteers for the Ufftian Revolutionary Council, to determine the policies which are to make uffts independent of all humans and raise them to their proper, inalienable position of superiority?"

Cheers. Yells. Uproar.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"My friends!" roared Link. "It is not befitting the glorious traditions of ufftdom that the Ufftian Provisional Government meet on the edge of a human Household, spied upon by humans! Let us march to some strictly ufftian area where the ufftian world capital will presently appear! Let us plan this metropolis! Let us organize our revolt! Let us march forward, shouting the slogans of ufftian freedom! Who marches?"

There was an uproar of cheering ... which was distinctly heard and unfavorably reacted upon in the Household from which Link had seemingly fled a short time before.

With a grandiose gesture, Link set his unicorn in motion, headed in a general direction. There was a stirring, and presently innumerable plump animals, with pinkish skin showing through the sparse hairiness, came trotting and galloping to be close to him. He leaned in his saddle and addressed those nearest him on the right.

"Will someone volunteer to lead the cadence of the march?" he asked. "We should have marching units, chanting the principles of this splendid revolt. Leaders, please!"

Voices clamored to be appointed. He appointed them all, with definitely non-specific wavings of his hand. He gave them a march-cadence chant. They tried it as a group and almost instantly abandoned the group to lead other groupings. Link knew by intuition that anybody who wants to talk, like the uffts, would want to lead others of his kind. It seemed that immediately there were half a dozen assemblages of uffts were gathered about voluble, self-appointed leaders, giving out a rhythmic outcry:

"Brackety-ax, co-ax, co-ax! Onward, onward, uffts! Brackety-ax, co-ax, co-ax! Onward, onward uffts!"

"That for the right wing of the Army of Liberation," he observed profoundly to those on his left. "Chant-leaders? Who will lead the chants?"

Uffts by dozens vociferously demanded to be appointed. He appointed them all, and furnished them with slogans. Shortly there were bands of the piglike creatures swarming over the countryside shrilling:

"Uffts triumphant! Uffts supreme! Uffts are now a single team!" There was another: *"Uffts have risen up to fight! Tremble, tremble at their might!"* A simpler one was still more successful: *"Uffts, uffts, on our way! Uffts, uffts, rise and slay!"*

The aboriginal population of Sord Three — the uffts — spread over an astonishing area as they scrambled up hillsides and flowed down the descending slopes. Those with satisfactory slogans to chant tended to stay more closely together, and to shout more loudly. Link's inventiveness gave out, and he appointed a Committee for Marching Recitatives to create other slogans and to pass on words of genius devised by anybody who happened to consider himself a genius. There was much squabbling, and some remarkably bloodthirsty marching chants were devised, but the committee throve.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

With a fine disregard for practicality but a completely sound estimate of the voluable mind, Link established all committees in an admirably vague state, so any ufft who wanted to belong to any committee *exoffico* became a member. He tossed off committee titles with abandon. The Committee on logistics for the Army of Liberation. The Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Strategy Council of the Ufftian Army. The Committee for Propaganda. The Committee on the Ufftian National Committeemen for the Coordination of the War Effort . . .

There were hills in the distance, and Link more or less headed for them. The afternoon sun was hot. The ground was only thinly covered with vegetation.

It was probably a good idea to head for an area where herbivorous creatures like the uffts could find something to eat. The hills looked green. And they might be cooler.

XV

There were deep shadows on the hillsides when an ufft from the self-appointed advance guards came galloping back from the leading part of the march. He pranced splendidly in half-circle, came alongside Link's unicorn and said in a strictly military manner:

"General, sir, the colonel in command of the advance guard asks if you wish to occupy the abandoned human Household in the valley to the left, sir. He suggests that for logistic reasons it may be a suitable temporary headquarters. There's a large spring, sir, with good water. What are your orders?"

"By all means occupy it," said Link. "We'll at least bivouac there for the night."

But he blinked at the now-steep hillsides around him. It was almost dark. The situation began to seem less than merely amusing. The uffts really meant this revolt business! He hadn't taken them seriously. It was not easy to remember that now. They acted like children, to be sure, but children would have gotten tired of this play-acting and marching long ago. Children, indeed, would have abandoned the encirclement of Harl's Household.

It occurred to Link that the uffts had more brains than he'd credited them with. They were desperately concerned about the stun-gun with which they'd been peppered the night before. If such weapons were to be available to the humans on Sord Three, the uffts would be in a very bad fix. They couldn't fight back. They had little hoofs instead of hands, and their brains were of no use to them because they lacked fingers and especially an opposable thumb . . . .

The swarming, now leg-weary small horde of uffts swung into a narrower valley. Far up this second valley there were human structures. Even in the gathering dusk they could be seen to be abandond. The valley walls were almost precipitous. Rock strata of varying colors alternated in slanting streaks of stone. Link saw a stratum of extremely familiar peach-colored stone. He shrugged his shoulders.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The uffts flowed on, in small clumps and big ones, some few as individuals, many in pairs. Weariness was breaking down the undisciplined bunching of the march. They were now merely a very large number of very weary small animals, sturdily following Link's leadership because he'd made a speech, and they couldn't do much but make speeches themselves, and so could not estimate the uselessness of speechmaking.

Some of them began to hurry, now. There was a small stream, which dwindled to a thread down the valley up which Link now rode morosely. Near the deserted and crumbling structures it was larger. At its source it was a considerable spring. Link saw crowds of the uffts drinking thirstily, and moving away and being replaced by others.

His own escort — some uffts had appointed themselves his personal escort and staff — his own escort moved on to the human structures. The roofs of the smaller buildings had collapsed. The Household or village must have been abandoned for many years. The largest structure would correspond with Harl's residence: it had been the residence of the Householder of his place. Doors had fallen. Windows gaped.

Link's escort stopped before it.

"I suppose," said Link, "that I'd better make this headquarters."

"Yes, sir," said an ufft's voice. "You'll give us more orders in the morning, sir? You've plans for the War of Liberation, sir?"

"I'll make them," said Link. He was vexed — with himself.

He dismounted, and many small aches and pains reminded him that a unicorn is not the most comfortable of riding animals. He went into the abandoned Householder's residence to survey it while some little light remained.

Inside was desolation. There was furniture remaining, but some of it had collapsed, and some was ready to fall of its own weight at any instant. There was a great hall, with an imposing chair of state like the one in Harl's great room. The flooring of the great hall was stone. Link gathered bits of dry-rotted furniture and kicked them. They fell apart. He built a fire, as much to cheer himself as for warmth.

Thana had prepared a lunch for him. He hadn't had time to consume it. It was bread and beans, but there were three plastic bottles of beer. Link ate a part of the bread-and-beans lunch. He started to drink one of the bottles of beer.

Then he looked up at the chair of state upon its dais. He shrugged, and again started to open the beer. But again he stopped.

With the flickering fire for light, he went over to the chair of state. He searched, and found a button. He pressed it. There were creaking, groaning sounds. The chair of state rose toward the ceiling. Something excessively dusty rose out of the pit beneath it. It was a duplier.

Link stared at it.

"It won't work," he told himself firmly. "It can't! They abandoned this place because it stopped working!"

It would have been sufficient rea-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

son. If the art of alloying steel had been lost, and even the art of weaving, and if agriculture had been practically abandoned, certainly nobody would have remembered how a duplier worked, to repair it when it broke down.

But Link tried the device. He put a scrap of wood in the middle bin, for a sample, and another scrap of wood in the raw-materials bin, and pressed the button. The duplier sank into the pit and the chair-of-state, creaking, descended to the floor. The button again. The process reversed. The duplier came back into view.

It hadn't worked. Nothing had happened.

Link went back to his tiny fire. He brooded. He liked novelty and excitement and sometimes tumult. He had none of these things about him now. He scowled at the firelight.

Presently he took a burning brand and went back to the duplier. He looked it over. It was complex. It utilized principles that he could not even guess. But there were wires threading here and there. He blew away the dust and stared at them.

One had rusted through. At another place a contact was badly rusted. Insulation was gone from a wire, which thereby must be shorted. He shifted the wires to find out how many were broken or whose contacts were loose.

He was irritated with himself, but the reasoning was sound. If nobody remembered even vaguely how electrical apparatus worked — and Harl said that there used to be electric but it existed no longer — if nobody bothered to understand, maybe they didn't know what a short circuit would do. They might not even understand what a loose contact could do!

He used up four torches, fumbling with obvious defects which any ten-year-old boy on another planet would have observed. Eventually he went back to the button. He pressed it. The duplier and after it the chair of state descended. He pressed the button; once more they rose in their established sequence.

The duplier worked. A scrap of wood in the materials hopper had almost disappeared. Another scrap of wood — a duplicate of the one in the sample bin — had appeared.

Link went out and barked orders. Uffts came tiredly in the darkness. Link took off the embroidered shirt he wore.

"I want some greenstuff," he said firmly, "and I want this shirt soaked in water and brought back dripping wet."

He hunted for more furniture to build up his fire while his orders were obeyed. Presently he put his dripping shirt — uffts could hardly carry water in any other manner — with branches and weeds into the duplier. He put one of his three bottles of beer in the sample hopper.

Shortly he owned four bottles of beer. The plastic containers were made out of the cellulose of the greenstuff stems. The beer was made out of the organic compounds involved and the water brought in the saturated shirt.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There was then a very, very great stirring in the darkness about the abandoned Household. Uffts excitedly foraged for greenstuff about the buildings. Weeds grew high. There were trees. Some were small but some were of considerable size because this human Household was abandoned. Link necessarily duplied his shirt so that more water could be brought by uffts who had no other way to carry it. The chair of state ascended and descended and rose and sank down again.

When Link lay down to sleep on a very hard floor, it was late at night.

The morale of the Ufftian Army of Liberation was high. Excessively high. He'd taught some uffts how to keep the duplier in operation with thirty-two bottles of beer in the sample hopper. The duplier worked steadily. Outside, in the darkness, uffts chanted gloriously, in splendid confidence of all the future:

"*General Link, what do you think?*
Brought his army here!
When he stopped up he popped
Passing out bottles of beer!"

Link went to sleep with various uncoordinated choruses chanting it. But he wasn't easy in his mind.

In fact, he had nightmares.

XVI

Link made a speech next morning. He'd hammered out, very painfully, the only possible course of action he could bring himself to advise or command his followers to follow. Essentially, it was to take no action at all. But he had to make it sound patrotic.

"My friends!" he said resoundingly from an extremely rickety balcony in the wall of the crumbling dwelling of a forgotten Householder, "my friends, I offer you a program for cementing and extending the consequences of the victories so soon to be won by the Army of Liberation of the Ufftian Nation!"

There were some cheers. Link had appointed a Committee for Emphasizing the Unity of Ufftian Opinion. It served the Revolution by cheering whenever he paused during an oration.

"The overall policy of the Revolution," he went on splendidly, "is to maintain and increase the army in fullest effectiveness, to cause its enemies to realize the futility of conflict, and ultimately to make a just and generous peace which shall realize all ufftian aspirations and establish the Ufftian Nation in permanent, unquestioned and unquestionable solidity!"

There were more cheers, and louder ones.

"To implement that policy," boomed Link, "the aid of every ufft is necessary! Volunteers are urgently needed for an enlarged Committee for Propaganda! Volunteer instructors are needed for the multitudes of uffts who will shortly join the Army and need to be indoctrinated in the principles of the Revolution! We must have the offered aid of discreet uffts for security services, for communications, for espionage! We need volunteer workers in education, and to make a survey of the cultural monuments and traditional inheritance all uffts will

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wish to preserve. In particular we need helpers for the preparation of a detailed history of this epoch-making and unanimous uprising for the realization of traditional ufftian aims. And —"

It was an admirable speech. The Committee for Emphasizing the Unity of Ufftian Opinion got into the swing of things and cheered lustily at appropriate spots. Other voices cheered with them. The volume increased as the speech went on, and when Link had finished his hearers were almost hoarse from their expressions of enthusiasm.

He felt, himself, a sort of forlorn satisfaction. He'd asked for volunteers for innumerable high-sounding boards and councils and committees. But he hadn't even referred to the organization of combat units. The Ufftian Revolutionary Army was prepared for propaganda, espionage, education, counter-espionage and probably social services and psychoanalysis. But Link had at no time suggested that anybody get ready to fight. And he hadn't suggested any limitation on the free beer issued by the Quartermaster Corps to any ufft or group of uffts who came into the shabby hall of state dragging a reasonable amount of green vegetation and a sufficient number of duplied, water-soaked shirts.

The popular appeal of his lack of program, coupled with free beer, was very great. Morale was high. Enthusiasm was unlimited. Recruiting was practically automatic. When uffts heard about free beer they headed for the spot. By the second day of the revolt there was a steady trickle of patrotic uffts joining up. By the third day it was a torrent. By the fourth day human households were practically paralyzed by lack of ufft-power for fifty miles in every direction.

Harl's Household, where the whole thing had started, was in perfect outward tranquility. Groups of pack animals could come and go between neighboring households without even a single shout of "Murderers!" flung at them along the way. But there were no more ufft-carts coming in with vegetation. There was no general strike, of course, but the effect was the same. Link had started out with perhaps two or three thousand followers. Four days later there were twenty thousand about the former human settlement. And still they came.

From time to time Link performed some ritual to remind the uffts that they were a revolutionary army. On one occasion he solemnly led an organized march down to where a vein of very familiar peach-colored rock showed in the steep valley wall. He and each of his followers picked up a fist-sized bit of the rock from where it had crumbled down to the valley floor. They took it back to the abandoned Household and made a six-foot cairn to mark the place where the Ufftian National Bill of Rights would presently be adopted.

The revolt continued — uneventfully.

From time to time Link drank a bottle of beer. For other subsistence

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he had to depend on duplied repetitions of the lunch Thana had made for him. It was a horribly monotonous diet, but he could do nothing about it. He couldn't do anything about anything. The uffts made endless speeches to each other, and drank innumerable bottles of beer. In so doing, they stripped the valley of vegetation. Presently the duplying and consumption of beer began to fall off because the necessary vegetable material had to be hauled two miles or more, with no wheeled carts to help.

Moodily, Link envisioned a better state of things. He could see a new use for dupliers. Given modern agricultural machinery, plus power, men could plough and plant and uffts could weed and harvest more than adequate food and textile crops. The dupliers could be used to secure the alloy materials and rare-element supplies needed for the restoration of lectric and vision-casts, synthetic fabrics, and probably means of transportation superior to unicorns. Link designed a new economic system he considered admirably suited to a world of uffts and men, but minus the menace to the rest of the galaxy the present state of things involved. He envisioned a world where visitors could be tolerated, dupliers would not be recognized as such, and there could be considerable satisfaction in being a Householder with — say — Thana as an essential part of one's Household.

Then disaster arrived with a party of uffts, sternly bringing a prisoner ufft to Link. The prisoner was abusive and rebellious.

"Sir," said a Security ufft sternly, "here's a spy. He came from Old Man Addison's Household. He was sent to spy out our military secrets."

"Yah!" snarled the spy. "You haven't got any military secrets. We've found 'em all out. And if you hurt me Old Man Addison'll know who did it and get even!"

He glared defiantly about him. Link reflected. A spy must, of course, be treated with great severity. As he was the generalissimo of the Army of Liberation, it was up to him.

"So you're a spy!" said Link pleasantly. "Now you have a chance to be a double spy — a very high rank in your profession. You begin by telling us everything you know about what the Householders plan against us in this war."

The spy-ufft made derisive noises. So Link said:

"If you prefer, we'll assemble the army. It will march past where you're held fast. Every member of the army will take one nip at you — just one. Nobody will kill you or do you any great harm, but in the process of receiving some tens of thousands of nips—"

The spy squealed in terror. At one nip per rebel, with probably forty thousand grim rebels in the Ufftian Army of Liberation . . . The spy agreed, shaking with terror, to tell everything. Everything!

"Take him away and question him," said Link in an official tone.

An hour later he received the report. The spy had not only told all he knew, but had identified

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

some other spies. Their stories tallied with his. The revolt was doomed.

With communication possible among Householders, Harl had begun the organization of Householders for the Restoration of the Good Old Days. There was much difference of opinion about what the really good old days had been like, but the badness of present days was obvious. Householders could not tolerate the existence of an Ufftian Army of Liberation, preparing to defy humans and re-cast the social system of Sord Three. So Householders had mobilized their retainers. They were armed with spears. Some four or five hundred humans were gathered at Old Man Addison's Household. On the morrow they would march on the spy-discovered Provisional Capital of the Ufftian Provisional Government. They were prepared to kill uffts with spears. They would do just that.

The Committee for Counter-Espionage clamored for Link's ear. They wanted to report identical information. Members of G-1 and G-2 came galloping. The news had been discovered by them. There was agitation. There was tumult. There was terror.

"My friends," said Link in stately sadness, "the cause for which we were prepared to suffer and die has been betrayed. The immediate success of our cause is now questionable. But its final success is certain! It would be wrong to throw away a single ufftian life in a temporarily hopeless cause, when ufftian intelligence and resolution and brilliance and courage can bring about the certainty of success at a later time. The Revolution will continue underground!"

It was an inspiration. Uffts lived in burrows, underground. Underground meant safety, uffishness, the familar, the normal, and the most satisfying way of life. Also it was admirably dramatic. Uffts cheered.

"From this time until the next occasion for uprising," said Link splendidly, "the Provisional Government will exist in secret. The Army of Liberation will exist in the hearts of its members. And all uffts, everywhere, will remember that time marches on, life is short but war is long, in union there is strength . . . and the uffts will rise again!"

He waved them out of the Householder's tumbledown residence.

Privately, he was intensely relieved. And he had one selfish reason for joy over the collapse of the revolt. He'd been living on duplied rations — replicas of the lunch Thana had prepared for him days ago. During a week and a half that lunch had gotten deplorably stale. Worse than that, in nine days of the same eatables Link had gotten hysterically tired of beans.

He watched a ceremonial march past of the Army of Liberation before it dissolved into individuals and family groups and moved away. But he'd asked some few uffts to volunteer for a last item of military enterprise if the need arose. They were thrilled. They seemed to disperse like the rest, but they stayed ready.

Link was alone in the decaying Household. He worked nearly all night long by very indifferent torch-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

light. When dawn came he cleared away the evidences of his labor. He brought the duplier up from its pit for the last time. He re-shorted a formerly shorted wire. Wires that had been broken he re-separated. Loose contacts he turned into no contacts at all. When he lowered it again into its pit, the duplier would duply no more.

And in the early morning he rode to meet the army of Householders and their retainers. In a sense, of course, he was going to surrender. But he felt sure that his explanation would satisfy Harl and therefore the rest.

But as he rode, his mind was not on such matters. It dwelt hungrily upon pictures of food that would not be beans.

He met the approaching human army a dozen miles from his former headquarters. But he was mistaken about his explanation satisfying anybody.

Harl was visibly distressed by the reception given Link. Thana, riding with him—she was the only girl with the human army — looked at him with uneasy, attempting-to-be-indignant eyes. The Householders' army made camp to discuss all the details of the situation. One detail was Thistlethwaite. He was placed under arrest as Link's fellow criminal. There would be a sort of court-martial under Old Man Addison. He was not an amiable character, and Link took an instant dislike to him. He was dourly frank about what the court-martial would decide. Against Thistlethwaite's protest he said:

"You stuck me once. I loaded your spaceboat an' you promised to come back an' pay for the cargo an' some dupliers too. You're back. Where's the stuff you was to bring?"

Thistlethwaite explained, indignantly.

"Huh!" said Old Man Addison. "That don't pay for more'n the trouble you made lately! I'll take the ship an' that for part payment, and you get hung for the rest. An' if any more strangers land here, they get hung right off with no questions asked an' no foolin' around."

The court-martial convened, officially. Link explained lucidly and he thought convincingly that the uffts around Harl's Household were already nearly in revolt, that they'd besieged Harl in his Household, and that with Harl's permission he'd gone out to persuade them to go off somewhere and let pack trains of unicorns relieve the food shortage. He pointed out that that was exactly what he'd accomplished. He even pointed out that no human had been injured or insulted by uffts following his oratorical suggestions. He'd assumed leadership of the uffts as a favor to the humans . . .

Harl cast the only vote in the court-martial in Link's favor. The briskly-arrived-at decision was that Link and Thistlethwaite were to be hanged next morning. The delay was to allow other householders, hurrying to the spot, to watch the pleasant scene.

Link remained composed, especially when uffts began to appear, one by one, and move casually about the camp.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Near sundown, Thana was admitted to the closely guarded place where Link and Thistlethwaite waited for morning and their doom. Thana looked at once indignant and subdued.

"I — I brought you a shirt, Link. I guess you didn't like that embroidered one."

"I liked it," said Link. "But thanks for this."

She wept suddenly. He patted her shoulder. She sobbed:

"I — feel like it's my fault, you being in trouble! If I'd had more food stored away you wouldn't have had to lead the uffts away and — and—Is there anything I can do?"

"Why, yes," admitted Link. "There's one little thing. If you could get a couple of unicorns saddled and waiting up the pass around midnight, that would soothe me a lot."

She said bitterly:

"You want to go back to Imogene!"

Link stared at her. Then he said painstakingly, "No, Thana. I told you about writing her a note and paying for some flowers before I took a spaceliner away. After the liner had lifted off I looked at the receipt the florist gave me. It happened that he'd written Imogene's name and address on the back of it. So he couldn't send the flowers or the note. So Imogene never heard from me. And if I know her, she's married long ago!"

She stared.

"Honestly, Link?"

"Have you," asked Link with dignity, "have you ever known me to tell a lie?"

She gulped.

"Where do you want the unicorns?" she asked.

XVII

He told her a place would not be easy to miss, perhaps a mile up the pass the human army intended to use. He did not mention the uffts about the camp, though they increased in number hourly.

She vanished.

In due time darkness fell. Stars shone. The camp quieted. There were snores. Then — in due time — midnight arrived. There was a sudden and dithering uproar. Tents collapsed; uffts had bitten through the tent-ropes. Unicorns found themselves free of their tethers and with their tender heels being nipped. They uttered dismal sounds and high-tailed it for the hills. Men crawled from under smothering tent canvas and tried to follow them, and were upset by rotund uffts running between their legs. Other uffts swarmed about, creating all possible chaos, including contradictory orders shouted in very good imitation of human voices.

When the confusion approximated bedlam, uffts came running briskly to Link.

He grabbed Thistlethwaite and led the way. A guard of uffts formed around them. Twice householders or their retainers seemed about to blunder into them, but each time they were trapped by uffts who ran between their legs, and then ran up and down their prostrate forms for good measure. These were the uffts

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Link had picked out of the disbanding army and instructed in the maintenance of a tradition he'd invented in case it was needed.

It had been needed. This was it.

He and Thistlethwaite headed up the mountain pass. Around them, their escort boasted of the successful guerrilla action they'd just accomplished. Unicorns appeared ahead. Link had to give warning that these were not to be stampeded too. But he was pleasantly surprised to discover that there were three unicorns instead of two. Thana tossed reins to Link.

"Come on!" she said fiercely. "I know the way!"

Link felt his spirits lift remarkably. He'd always liked novelty and excitement and on occasion tumult. This amounted to all three. And if Thana carried on as those few words promised, his life would never be devoid of the first two anyhow. And maybe the third as well.

They headed up the pass. The unicorns climbed. Thistlethwaite brooded. There was no longer hope of a business deal with Old Man Addison. There was no longer hope of business. He'd be lucky to get out of this with a whole skin. He followed dismally as Thana and Link went on against a sky-full of stars.

In an hour they were over the pass. Link turned the animals into the valley where the now-abandoned ProvisionalCapital of the Ufftian Republic was again dark and silent under the heavens.

"There's something up here I want to take along," he explained to Thana. "I worked all last night to get it ready."

He explained as they rode, and as he solved the riddle of how to open the saddle-bags hanging from his saddle. The deserted buildings looked eerie in the starlight, but he pointed out to Thana where he'd partly pulled down a cairn of peach-colored stones. He told her why. Interestedly, she helped him bring out improvised bags — made of duplied shirts — and empty their contents into the saddlebags. Thana looked at the small crystals.

"They're pretty," she said.

They turned about and went away from the abandoned village. They rode, and rode, and rode. Thistlethwaite peevishly observed that Thana and Link rode close together. Thistlethwaite was not happy. His business plans were wrecked and he ached from the motion of the unicorn. Ultimately they came to the ufft city. The unicorns' night-vision kept them from stumbling into the holes of ufft burrows. Querulous voices sounded around them. Link reined in.

"My friends," he said profoundly, "this is Link Denham, escaped from your oppressors. I go to function as a government in exile and to prepare for the resurgance of the ufftian race!"

There were some feeble cheers. Not many.

"Meanwhile," boomed Link, "follow me! In the ship there are gifts and treasures. You may call them the treasury of the Ufftian Repub-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lic. We will distribute them, and you may use them in bargains with men. Follow me!"

Thistlewaite, in the presence of many uffts, remained shrunken and silent and alarmed. The three unicorns crossed the city, accumulating a following as they went. They reached the ship. Thistlethwaite shiveringly told Link where to find the oxygen torch. Link barely had it when there was an alarm.

Men on unicorns approached, though still a long way off. Link resumed command. He sent a guerrilla band to bite the heels of the unicorns, to try to disperse them and in any case to delay them.

With a fine competence he cut away the welds and made the lifeboat available. Generously, he cut loose the welded-shut doors of the cargo holds. He heaved the heavy saddlebags into the lifeboat. The uffts swarmed into the ship, carrying away all ufft-portable objects from the cargo holds. They did not notice Thistlethwaite as he got apprehensively into the lifeboat.

More alarm. The pursuers of Link and Thistlethwaite were steadily coming nearer. The uffts were unloading cargo more rapidly than anybody could have believed, but they panted their warnings.

There was faint, faint gray light to the east. Link cut his way into the control-room to get the *Galactic Directory*. He came back.

"Where's Thana? Where's Thana?" He grew alarmed.

She appeared, scared but smiling.

"I — wanted to be sure you'd— miss me —"

He bundled her into the spaceboat with the directory. He shoved Thistlethwaite in after her. He opened the outer doors of the lifeboats blister and shouted to the swarming uffts below.

"I shall return!" said Link grandiloquently. "Fear not, I shall return!"

There was a faint, faint gray light to the east. The lifeboat blister valves opened. Link could see a knot of men and animals moving slowly toward the ship, surrounded by yapping, snapping uffts. He swore under his breath.

The men from the Householder's army were forcing their way into the exit-port as he dogged the lifeboat's doors shut. He pressed appropriate buttons and moved appropriate levers. The lifeboat seemed to topple slowly outward. Its rockets roared.

It left the *Glamorgan* behind and darted for the dimming stars.

Days later, Thistlethwaite worked zestfully upon a new contract he would propose to Link.

There was to be a new organization, the Sord Three Development Corporation. Link was to provide the entire working capital. Thistlethwaite was to have the final say in all business decisions. Link would purchase and load up a first-class modern spaceship. He would carry back to Sord Three samples of all needed alloying materials. He would establish a duplier by the sea-shore to remove from flowing seawater— considered as raw material — the rare minerals required to duply the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

large inventory of new, currently undupliable objects and instruments needed on Sord.

Link, privately, had designed beer-brewing equipment adapted to be operated by uffts. There would be enormous dislocations of the present economy when uffts didn't need to trade with humans for beer, but it would come about gradually. Humans would start to grow vegetation to make up for the lessened ufft-provided supply. They would, in fact, start to grow crops. Their dupliers would be more valuable getting alloying materials from sea-water than in making replicas of wormy apples from ufft-carts full of roots, barks, berries, blossoms and flowers.

That, of course, was the long-term prospect. For the immediate future there would be hell to pay on Sord Three when Link went back.

The disturbance would provide novel experiences. Exciting ones. From time to time there would doubtless be tumult. But if no other ship landed on Sord Three for just a very few years, — why — when another ship did land it would not produce disaster. There would be no dupliers in action. Nobody could picture a galaxy-wide demand for devices that then would be known as mineral - extracting equipment working on seawater.

And then, many days after the departure from Sord Three, Link pointed out a small crescent against the stars to be seen from the lifeboat ports.

"We're going to land there?" asked Thana trustfully.

Link nodded, and patted her hand.

"We land," he explained. "I go to see a jeweler. I sell him a few carynths — a quart or so. I'll start things working for our return trip. And then . . . Do you mind a quiet wedding, Thana."

"N-not at all."

He nodded. They held hands as the lifeboat headed for the planet before them. There were seas, and continents, and ice caps. There were cities. Four saddlebags full of carynths could hardly all be sold on one planet without breaking the price, but a discreet distribution by spaceship to responsible jewellers on other worlds . . .

"We can start back," Link promised, "in two months at most."

And they very nearly did. But it was a few days more than two months before the *Glamorgan Two* lifted off and vanished untraceably in space, actually headed for Sord Three. The delay was because Link had arranged for something special, for Thana, and they had to wait for her second carynth necklace to be finished.

It was said that she was the only woman in the galaxy to own more than one.

END

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Provenance of Swift

BY LYLE G. BOYD

We don't say that Martians have really walked among us. We only say that if they did — here's how it may have been!

I know as well as anyone that the "There Are Martians Among Us" or "Look Ma, Three Eyes!" theme has been worked to the limit in science fiction. But when, while working on an entirely different piece of research, by accident you stumble on to solid facts and logical inferences indicating that at least one Martian (and possibly more than one) *did* successfully masquerade as an Earthman for a whole lifetime, you can't keep quiet. You have to try, at least, to publish the truth.

The "man" I'm talking about was Jonathan Swift.

Now wait! Don't toss this aside with some comment such as, "Oh, that old two-moons-of-Mars business." The moons are only the beginning. Let me tell you the rest.

My interest in this problem began more than a year ago when a group of us at the Observatory were talking about the Martian moons and other "coincidences" in the history of astronomy, and a colleague (Mr. E. N. Hayes) remarked, "If I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

remember correctly, Swift was kidnapped by his nurse soon after he was born, and disappeared for more than three years. Maybe he was carried off to Mars and saw the moons with his own eyes."

Diverted by this fancy, I went home that night and consulted a reference book to check the details—and at once decided to broaden my inquiry. As I continued I felt at first bewilderment, then incredulity, and finally the shocked, reluctant conviction that Swift *had* learned about the moons at first hand. But he had not been kidnapped as a specimen of *Homo sapiens,* taken to the Red Planet, and then brought back. Instead, he had been a native Martian who made a one-way trip to Earth some time around the year 1666. Whether he remained here from choice or from necessity there is no way of finding out.

This conclusion is inescapable. It is supported by the evidence of the Moons, the Family, the Schools, the Personality, the Names and the Falling Stars.

Since you may not remember much about Swift (I didn't) aside from the fact that he wrote *Gulliver's Travels,* let me summarize briefly.

According to the official biographies, he was born in Ireland on November 30, 1667; was educated at the University of Dublin, became involved in British politics, received preferment in the Church of England, published a number of poems, satires and controversial articles, was involved romantically with at least two women but never married, and died an embittered misanthrope at the age of 77.

This was the cover story. It is so thin that it could hang together only as long as no one questioned it.

First, let's consider the evidence of the Moons. The story is familiar to everyone who has ever taken an elementary course in astronomy.

In 1727, Swift published a book called *Gulliver's Travels,* purporting to relate adventures of one Lemuel Gulliver. In describing a visit to a flying island called Laputa, Gulliver reported that Laputan astronomers, working with superior telescopes, had discovered that the planet Mars was accompanied by two natural satellites, revolving at specified distances from the planet, and with specified periods of revolution.

Since at that time Earth was supposed to be the only planet that had a Moon, Swift's readers regarded these statements merely as amusing adornments to an imaginative tale. Voltaire kept the joke alive when in his *Micromegas* (1750) he repeated the assertion that Mars had two moons. Then, more than 150 years after Gulliver had reported them, the American astronomer Asaph Hall discovered, during the favorable opposition of 1877, that Mars did in fact have two satellites (to which he gave the names Phobos and Deimos, Fear and Panic)—just as the Laputans had claimed.

True, their measurements had been inexact, or else Gulliver had been careless in making his notes. He placed the inner moon (Phobos) at twice its actual distance (12,648 vs.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

5800 miles) from the center of Mars, and gave its period of revolution as 10 hours instead of the actual 7 hours and 39 minutes. The outer moon (Deimos) he placed at 21,080 miles instead of the observed 14,600 miles, and gave its period of revolution as 21½ instead of the actual 30 hours and 18 minutes. In spite of these discrepancies, the two sets of measurements are obviously of the same order of magnitude.

Hall's observations revealed an even more astonishing coincidence. According to the Laputan astronomers, the moons revolved around Mars faster than the planet turned on its axis.

Hall's figures showed that the inner moon actually made more than three circuits of the planet while Mars was completing one rotation. We now know of course, that Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, among them, boast at least 29 moons. But of these 29, only little Phobos, unique in the solar sysem, outpaces its primary planet!

A common reaction to this staggering series of correct predictions is an indifferent comment such as "How odd," or "Swift must have been a lucky guesser," or "Where do these writers get their crazy ideas?" But the mathematical probability that a man should make so many lucky guesses cannot be more than 1 in several billion. How did Swift know the facts, a hundred and fifty years earlier than any other resident of the Earth?

The answer is easy——if he is a Martian.

(It might be argued, of course, that no *bona fide* Martian would have given the times and the distances so inaccurately. But since he was not using his own language, he might easily have made such mistakes. Furthermore, he was probably careless in his attempts to convert Martian units of measurement into those employed by the British; and his carelessness was probably increased by his contempt for the ridiculous terrestrial system based on humanoid physical features such as the number of fingers and toes, and the length of the forearm.)

According to the laws of probability, at least once in so many billion times a man might make such a series of correct guesses, purely by chance. Obviously the evidence of the moons was not enough, by itself, to prove my case. But if Swift had actually been a Martian, then a good deal of other evidence ought to exist and to point towards the same conclusion. I began to wonder about his family background.

Swift's origins, I discovered, were a mystery even to his contemporaries. He was supposedly born in Dublin, a posthumous child, several months after the death of his father; his paternal grandfather had died ten years before that. Thus no direct male relative existed to attest to the circumstances of his birth. Very soon after the child was born, both infant and nursemaid disappeared and did not reappear in Dublin until nearly four years later.

Swift himself seemed confused and/or indifferent to his family background. To some friends he ex-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pressed doubt as to who had been his real father. To one acquaintance he stated that he had been born in England, the son of a clergyman; to another, that he had been born in Ireland, the son of an attorney.

Only a foreigner, surely, would have treated the matter as one of no importance. The true Irishman pugnaciously resents being labeled an Englishman, and *vice versa;* yet Swift seemed oblivious to the distinction.

Thus the evidence of the Family opens a number of questions. How could an Irishman have been so ignorant of his own origins. Why should the nurse have spirited the infant away? Why should the mother have waited nearly four years, apparently without protest, until the child reappeared? What was happening to the boy during this interval?

If Swift were a Martian, reasonable answers appear to all these problems. An alien mature entity, residing in the body of a human infant, might understandably have arranged for a period of seclusion during which he could get used to his new environment. To human eyes the baby might well have looked strange, idiotic or monstrous; he might even have shown frightening non-infantile behavior. A grieving, widowed, poverty-stricken mother and a loyal nurse might well have acquiesced in a scheme to keep the child out of sight, away from neighborhood gossip, and may have intended the separation to be permanent. Then, as time went on and the entity learned to conform his features and his behavior more closely to the human pattern, he would have seemed to become more normal enough to be welcomed back into the family.

Those who knew him in later life, however, agreed that he always exhibited certain peculiarities of appearance—to say nothing of manner!

If the child was concealed for any such reason, I concluded, then other strange events should have occurred as he grew older. To find out what Swift was like, compared with other young Irishmen of his age, I turned to the evidence of the Schools.

Here the details are meager, but significant. The man who was later to be called the most original of English writers was, as a schoolboy, dull, ignorant and sullen. At the age of 14 he entered the University of Dublin, where he did nothing but read poetry and a little history. When his tutor urged him to work at the required studies, Swift refused, proudly announcing that he could reason without assistance from the artificial rules of logic.

The University did not share his opinion. In fact, he exhibited such great deficiencies in background knowledge that when he first sat for his degree, he failed. He failed on the second attempt also but, through the intercession of friends, was finally presented with a B.A. *Speciali gratia* —by special favor.

Feeling disgraced, Swift for the first time seemed to realize how little he knew, compared with other students. He then began a program of intensive work and, for seven years, forced himself to study eight hours

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a day, until he had filled in the gaps in his education.

A Martian, descended from a more advanced species might have responded to schooling in just this way. Believing himself superior to members of the human race, he would have felt it unnecessary, perhaps even degrading, to study the things of interest to primitives. Only later would he have recognized that, superior though he was, he would have to learn what Earthmen learned if he was to live among them successfully.

His personality, however, remained alien. Facts he could master. But the nuances of human behavior and human emotions were forever beyond him. His very appearance was strange. He was physically unattractive, and he had a muddy complexion that never looked clean no matter what treatment he applied. His master passion, according to the testimony of his friends, was an imperial pride. Contemptuous of the minds, feelings and habits of his contemporaries, he satirized them as the Yahoos, described by Gulliver. He may even have thought them dirty in their personal habits, for he continually washed himself with "oriental scrupulosity."

Swift's relationship with people can only be called bizarre. He never laughed. Bad-tempered with friends, rude to servants, he did not even understand the common laws of hospitality. Friends who visited him were never served food or drink, although he would sometimes give them money to go out and buy a meal. Although he seemed to derive some pleasure from a female companion, no woman ever shared his home and he never married, supposedly because of a "constitutional infirmity."

Two women were important in his life, but his treatment of them showed complete ignorance of the feminine nature. The "Stella" of the famous *Journal* was rumored to be his mistress or his wife by a secret marriage, but in fact she was probably neither. For years she lived in a neighboring house, giving him her full devotion; and he responded by urging her to find a husband.

He similarly (and simultaneously) accepted the affectionate friendship of "Vanessa" until her demands for marriage became so unwelcome that he ended their acquaintance and she soon died of grief. "Stella," too, died of a broken heart. Swift preserved a lock of her hair which he labeled, with a coldness surely impossible in a human being: "Only a woman's hair!"

His greatest gift was originality. Dr. Johnson remarked that Swift never took an idea from another man or a book. But what human writer can create without having borrowed from other men?

The evidence of the Personality not only supports the theory that Swift was a Martian; it also suggests, indirectly, something of the social structure on his home planet. Physical contact between individuals must have been solitary acts never performed in the presence of others. And an intimate relationship between two persons of different sex must have been unknown. How the Martions did take in nourishment and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

how they propagated the species are questions on which we can only speculate.

Since Swift dared to describe the Martian moons and thus show off his superior knowledge, his peculiar sense of humor evidently compelled him to hint at his true identity, perhaps so that he could gloat over the stupidity of men who could not appreciate the hints he gave them. If he left such obvious clues in one field. I reasoned, he may have left others.

Knowing his interest in etymology, I began to look more closely at the names associated with Swift's life—and discovered a vast new mine of corroborative detail.

Both "Stella" and "Vanessa" had borne the given name "Esther," which of course means "star," just as *stella* does. Since Swift was incapable of normal relations with a woman, he may deliberately have singled out these two chiefly because of their names. In this way he could tell the world, even though it did not understand, that he could feel attachment only for a creature from the stars; that is, from another planet.

But if he had chosen his women friends on so peculiar a basis, might he not have done the same in choosing the family to which he allied himself? Frivolous as this may seem to us, he had apparently done exactly that.

"Swift" has many meanings, all of which when properly interpreted point to the truth. As an adjective, swift means being able to move very quickly over a great distance—from Mars to Earth, for example. As a noun, a swift can mean lizard of the genus *Sceloporus,* related to the dinosaurs and stegosaurs of pre-history; in other words, our Swift was saying that he belonged to a species of great antiquity. A swift can also mean a ghost moth of the genus *Hepialidae*—an elusive creature. The ghost moth lacks a *fraenum* (a group of bristles on the wing), the Latin word for "bridle". Thus our Swift was saying that he wore no bridle, was not subject to the restrictions of earthly customs and laws. A swift can also be a bird of the family *Micropodidae,* a migratory species and the fastest of all the British birds. Clearly, Swift was saying that he had migrated to Earth from some place an enormous distance away.

Even his Christian name hints at his secret. "Jonathan" means "gift of Jehovah" or "the Lord gives;" that is, our Swift was sent to this planet by an all-powerful prince.

At this point I found possible evidence that other aliens may have journeyed to Earth, either with Swift or about the same time. A well-known astrologer in his Almanac for 1707 published predictions for the coming year, and specifically warned against rivals and imposters. Such nonsense should have been beneath the notice of a man of Swift's prominence but, on the contrary, he responded by perpetrating an elaborate hoax. The following year, under a pseudonym, he issued a set of fake predictions stating that the astrologer would die on a certain day of the coming year. Later, he caused the publication of a news item affirming that the astrologer had died as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

predicted. So successful was the hoax that the poor fellow had to take newspaper space to advertise his still being alive.

This incident, otherwise incomprehensible, takes on meaning when we realize that the astrologer's name was "Partridge." A partridge is also a bird. Since he had specifically warned against "rivals" and "imposters," he may have been hinting at the Martian who posed as Jonathan Swift. Partridge may have been a less powerful Martian (the partridge is in many ways inferior to the swift), or he may have been an immigrant from another planet. In any case, we can scarcely doubt that they recognized each other.

Other names provide their own clues. Why should Swift have chosen to call the hero of his travels "Lemuel Gulliver?" "Lemuel" means "consecrated to God"—as Swift's creation, he was also in the service of Swift's Martian overlord. A "gull" may be a strong flyer, referring again to the long journey to Earth. More probably, I think, Swift used the syllable in the sense of dupe or victim; and "ver" obviously comes from the Latin *veritas*, meaning truth.

Thus in the person of Gulliver, Swift was saying he intended to gull the public and, under the guise of a joke, to portray the truth about the inferior human species.

All these lines of evidence support the theory that Swift was a Martian. We are left with some unanswered questions, however. When, and by what means did Swift make the journey from Mars?

Here, admittedly, we leave the realm of fact for that of conjecture, but we can make some sound guesses. Laputa, the flying island that Swift described, closely resembled many of the flying saucers reported here in recent years: it was disk-shaped, and was powered by the attractive and repulsive forces of magnetism. The similarities are too great to be mere coincidence.

Obviously, Swift traveled to our planet on a flying saucer.

If this hypothesis is correct, then someone, somewhere, should have seen it arrive. A search of the literature does indeed reveal that a remarkable flaming object was observed to approach the Earth, about a year before the date of Swift's birth. According to Chinese astronomical records in the *Tien-wen Kao-ku-lu*, on November 7, 1666, "A great star fell. A small star followed."

In November of that year, the Earth was crossing the orbit of the Leonid meteor stream, as it did every 33 years, and encountering great showers of debris from Comet Temple. November 7 was near the maximum of this display. To be worthy of comment against a background of hundreds of other "shooting stars," the descending Martian saucer, braking against our atmosphere and ejecting the smaller craft that carried Swift to the ground, must indeed have been something of a spectacular thing to see.

The date, too, is consistent with the arrival of a ship from Mars. In the spring of 1666, from February to April, Mars was in good opposition. Ley and von Braun have calcu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lated that with the two planets in a favorable position, a spaceship would require 260 days to make the journey from Mars to Earth. We may conclude, then, that a ship left Mars on or about February 21, 1666 (Earth reckoning), and reached the Earth on November 7.

Where the ship landed we cannot know. Why an interval of a year (plus a few days) elapsed before the Martian entity effected the substitution in the Swift family, we also cannot know, though various suggestions offer themselves. He must have had to search a wide area before he found a family with the kind of names he wanted, to which a male child had just been born. He may also have required time to make the necessary physiological adjustments to an unfamiliar type of body. The mechanics of the substitution must remain a mystery; about the fact itself there can be little argument.

One more point.

When Jonathan Swift was finally established in his parsonage near Dublin, he had some alterations made in the grounds. He constructed a fishpond and, in what nostalgic mood we can only dimly imagine, planted a garden with poplars and willows on the borders of—*a canal!* END

New! In the January issue of *IF* —

THREE WORLDS TO CONQUER

Beginning of a great 2-part serial

by Poul Anderson

WATERSPIDER

A fast and funny novelette

by Philip K. Dick

— and many more in the January *If*, now on sale!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Alpha, Beta, Love...

BY BILL DOEDE

ILLUSTRATED BY NODEL

They weren't human — but they had some very human characteristics!

1

A few miles south of the twenty-third parallel, an empty river bed with a forgotten name takes a turn around a rocky hill and disappears under a wild growth of spiny brush.

An ancient stone house on the hill is mute evidence that someone lived in the vicinity; but that was long ago, when the water flowed like green wine in the river and the vegetation was of tropical character. Stones have fallen from the house and lie half covered by the mold of ages. Inside, rubble fills the hearth. Two spherical, lustrous stones lie on the rubble, clearly saved from dirt and leaf mold and spider excrement. Their luster is deep and green-white. They are pulsing, pulsing, pulsing.

Between the house and the river bed is where the great starship ejected her cargo. Boxes, machinery, tools, communications equipment. The boxes are new, the machinery shiny, the tools are encased in plastic preservatives. The ship's thunder has echoed away. A skittish breeze rustles the brown grass. Two birds in a nearby bush argue heatedly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A young man with sharp, intelligent features, and a girl of clear skin and deep brown eyes, emerge from the underbrush beyond the clearing. The girl unslings a small packet from her shoulder.

Now she sighed heavily, glancing around. "It's beautiful, Sam. But I'm homesick already and the ship's not gone half an hour."

Sam laughed. "No time for that. It's midday now. Before dark we must make a door of some kind for the house, and stack our supplies under cover. No telling what kind of animals live here. Survey, as you know, doesn't take the time to classify all plants and animals and insects." He lowered the beam gun from his shoulder, a powerful weapon operating on monochromatic light. He laid it on the boxes. "Later on," he said, "we will build the house. Our own house."

"We don't need it. All we want is right here." She waved at the stone ruin, at the boxes.

"Elena." He looked closely at her. "You said . . . "

"I know what I said!" she cried, kicking at a box. "Besides I've never lived in the bubble. They say the fresh air is wonderful. No air-conditioning, just God's own fresh air."

He faced her, eyes angry. "Is that what you came out here for, fresh air? Did you have to travel ten light-years just for fresh air?"

"Sam, why are you talking like this? Is this the way you operate? When the ship is gone, do you turn into a brute? Just because we're alone and there's no law here."

Sam shook her hand from his arm and stalked toward the stone house. Inside, he turned and watched her, down-slope, sitting on a box. His eyes took in her hair, the curve of breasts, long slim line of leg.

How many planets had he spent his two years on? Five? Or was it six? Each time to prove if a planet was fit for colonization. Each time with a different mate. He remembered old Matson, of the Colonization Board. "Some day," Matson had said, "you'll look at your current mate and say that this is the one, that this one is yours to keep. When that happens you are through as a Pioneer."

Now it had happened, back there in the midnight of hyperspace.

But it was a one-way street. Elena was new at the job. This was her first time out. She still felt the call of new worlds, the unutterable yearning to see what the next world was like.

He turned from watching her, to clean the large room, to throw out the stones and accumulated rubble. Then he found the spheres, lying on the hearth, pulsing with a light of their own. He picked them up, carried them to the doorway where the light was better. He turned them over and over in his hand, marveling at the light, at their depth, their purity. Then he dropped them into his pocket and set to work.

Afterward, when the flaming sun departed, Sam lit a huge fire and they slept beside it in their pneumatic, warm sleeping bags. The night was long and fitful, filled with strange sounds and imagined dangers, but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

when morning came the sun flamed up again, bright and warm, over the spiny brush. The small, lizard-like creatures crawled back under the brush, taking with them the puzzling scent of humans. The birds sang to the new sun. Spiders sought the cool, dark shade against the stone house and along the patio wall.

Sam Kelso stood in the patio thinking about the work to be done. Absently he drew the spherical stones from his pocket. They promptly disappeared. He found them in his pocket again. This happened several times. An eerie chill crept up his spine.

Then a thought brushed his mind, a touch only, like hairs on the arm stirred by the wind, a tap on the shoulder, an insertion.

"What did you say?" he called to Elena, who combed her hair out beyond the patio, in the sun.

"Nothing." She looked out over the dry river bed.

"No. You said something. What was it?"

"Don't be silly, Sam." She said it as if any other name would be more sensible.

He strode across the patio area, leaped the wall, stood before her, young and strong as a bull, helpless because she was not inflamed by his presence. But now that was only a fleeting thought. He took her shoulder made her look up. "You said something just now."

"Sam, please! Don't be a brute." She tried to shake his hand off.

"You certainly did."

"All right! So I said something."

"What was it?"

"How should I know?" She laughed, throwing her head back. "You tell me what it was."

Sam decided right away that Elena was trying to make him think he was insane. Or perhaps something strange was going on. The stones looked alive in his hand, pulsing, their light emanating from the center rather than reflecting from the surface. He remembered that there was a race of creatures in the Cygnian system with direct contact abilities, and of course training did not exclude that possibility. Even then, he moved away from Elena before trying the first thought.

After that first contact he stood there in the morning sun, conversing silently with the spheres. It was not difficult. Merely crystallize a thought and think of it moving out toward them.

The two spheres were intelligent, not as a result of the evolutionary process, but from a catastrophe in the solar system that had somehow impressed a personality in the atomic matrices of the crystalline structure. One was called Eoli and the other Llit.

"We were chosen for immortality," they said. "Physical dimensions of these crystals and geometric configuration must be perfect for us to exist at all. The mathematical probability of this happening is practically zero. Hence, we are unique."

Sam was new at interpreting thought patterns, but he felt this was offered rather smugly.

Over beyond the patio, Elena be-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gan to hum the melody of her favorite song. She got up and twirled in a dance, holding her arms as if someone were dancing with her. Head thrown back, breasts afire, sculptured hips, she was the answer to a computer's prayer. "Hey, Sam!" she called gaily. "Quit talking to yourself!"

One of the stones disappeared from his hand. It did not appear in his pockets The remaining sphere said. "I am Eoli. Llit is sometimes inconsistent. She was a female of our kind before the catastrophe. Her first mating was to have taken place that same night. To her, Elena is everything she lost, and in our memory there is no dimming with time. Llit is horribly aware of how Elena refused you last night. It upset her immeasurably."

Sam had been upset about that himself, but this was degrading. "Spying? A psychotic intelligence?"

"No, no," Eoli said, "Not psychotic, merely female. The spying, as you think of it, was not intentional. We remained in your pocket last night because we wanted to be near the only intelligence to find this planet in ten thousand years. Can you censure us? Near or far, we are subject to your pain or pleasure. There is a remedy, of course. I have already developed an insulator against unwanted reception."

"And Llit?"

"Llit is interested in only her frustrations. She is morbid, that one. She'd rather remove the cause than find a cure."

"What do you mean by that?"

"You must leave this planet. I regret this, but your safety depends on it. She may kill you both."

Sam said, "We came here to settle. We'll turn this desert into productive land. After we show that it can be done, others will come. We will build cities. We will not be driven off."

There was a slight pause. Then, "Elena has cut her hands."

Sam glanced up. Elena was gone. He rushed out of the patio area, calling her name. Then he saw her, running down slope toward the dry river bed. Her dark hair streamed out behind her. She stumbled, tore her trousers, got up and ran again. She slid down the embankment into the ancient river bed. She kicked at stones. She screamed. She scrambled up the far bank. The dry, bristled brush clawed at her hands as she pulled herself up.

Then she stopped, suddenly, staring at her bleeding hands and torn clothes. "What happened?" she cried when Sam came up. "How did I get here?"

Sam stared at her. Eoli had said, "Elena has cut her hands." How could he say that? How could he know it, *before* it happened?

"Sam, what did I do?" Elena cried.

Sam believed her. "You really don't know, do you?"

"Sam, wait. There was . . . something."

"What was it? You saw something?" He smiled and shook his head.

"No, don't laugh."

"Hear? You heard something."

"No, not exactly. I'm trying to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

think." She pressed a hand to her forehead.

"You felt something. It touched you." Sam was not smiling now.

"No, no. In my mind. Some . . . pressure forcing me. Oh, I can't explain."

A coldness brushed the back of Sam Kelso's neck. "What was it? How did it feel?"

They stood in the beating sun, listening, watching, straining for a sound, a clue. Across the empty river the ancient house dozed—the last remains of a once great race, except for two crystal spheres in Sam's pocket.

Llit was back again.

Sam went immediately to the stone house and took a shovel from the heap of supplies. He dug a hole in the ground and laid the two stones in, and heaped rocks and earth over the stones, and tramped it down firmly. He knew it would do no good; but he hated them now, almost as much as he hated the computer for choosing a wife for him that he could love, but who rejected him.

He knew the spheres did not breathe oxygen, but he forced himself to other work, to avoid wondering if they were suffocating down there in the ground. He began uncrating supplies, machinery, seeds for planting. There were inflatable tents, strong against the wind, cool in summer, warm in winter. In other crates were huge tanks to be inflated, where the tiny, embryonic animals would be grown to maturity. But this would be later, after seeds were planted, and Sam and Elena had gained more familiarity with their new environment.

II

Late in the afternoon the sky darkened and it began to rain, and Sam and Elena were very perplexed at this, because this was semi-desert country and this was the wrong season. Here was another score Sam had to settle with the computer. Given facts by the Survey team, the computer had chosen this latitude for their settlement. The seeds were selected for this climate. Would they survive?

The next morning the smell of water drifted into the stone house. The two pioneers got up and took away the makeshift barricade from the doorway. Elena gasped. "There's water in the river, Sam. Look!"

Sam took the two stones from his pocket and held them in his hand, pulsing, pulsing.

"We apologize," Eoli said. "It was wrong to saturate the area and fill the river."

"You did that?" Sam had hoped for an explanation of the unexpected rain; he had not anticipated a confession.

Llit said, "Don't tell him anything. Better to kill them now."

There was an exchange of rapid thoughts between the two spheres. Sam could only recognize that they were conversing, he could not follow.

"Be patient with her," Eoli said. She is impetuous at times. Yes, the rain was caused by her, in a fit of frustration. Energy consumed in making rain is energy unavailable for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sorrow. Actually, the cure for this is very simple. If Elena were to love you, generously and sincerely, Llit would be very happy. Have you told her about us?"

"Yes."

"Then I will contact her and explain. I am certain she would want to contribute to the success of your mission."

"No. She must decide this for herself. I don't want her influenced in any way."

"All right, then," Eoli said, rather flippantly, "but watch her. Llit is impetuous."

If Sam had had more experience reading thoughts he would have seen that Eoli meant to deceive. The sphere secretly contacted Elena and spoke to her about Sam. She was furious and confronted Sam about it.

"I don't like that kind of interference in our private lives," she said. "Do you know what that . . . *stone* asked me? He wanted to know if I loved you. And if not, why didn't I come to my senses? He said the whole planet was hungry for the sound of children's voices, the old lecher."

"What did you tell him?"

"I told him to keep his nose out of my business."

"He doesn't have a nose."

"Well, you know what I mean."

She was able to grin back at him, and he concluded that the incident had not cut too deeply. But he was sufficiently upset to go out behind the stone house and call Eoli with all his might. When the sphere appeared, Sam told him off. "I understand you lied to me," he said.

"Apologies. Apologies."

"She told you to keep your nose out of our business. That goes for me, too. If you don't, I'll take you apart, atom by atom."

Sam received a vivid mental picture of himself, a huge, heavy-muscled caricature, bending over a high-powered microscope with a tiny tweezers in his fingers, picking atoms from a tiny crystal sphere.

"I meant no harm," Eoli said. "The objective was to solve the rain problem for you. But I learned something. Earthmen are far more complex than I expected."

"We aren't so complex that Llit can't understand our need for the rain to stop."

"Love," Eoli said, "is the beginning and the end of all things. I wish I were back in an organic body. I'd teach that woman of yours a few things."

Sam terminated the conversation abruptly and strode back around the house.

Elena had disappeared.

He ran into the house, calling her name. It was empty. Outside beyond the patio area, her footprints pointed the direction she had gone. He followed. She had gone west across the rocky terrain. Apprehensively, he hurried along beside her footprints. Soon the rocks dwindled into a flat, bushy plain. The prints were farther apart, deeper. Elena had been running.

Sam sprinted, keeping an eye on the footprints. Soon he could see her, running lightly, jumping from rock to rock, arms outstretched for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

balance, hurrying, hurrying.

"Elena!"

She did not hear. Breathless already, he forced more effort into his steps. He had almost reached her when he saw the gorge. Wide and deep, it offered sharp, saw-toothed rocks for her yearning body. She stopped, poised on the lip of the gorge, swaying. Sam caught her. For a moment she fought against him crying. Then she relaxed.

"Again?" he asked, speaking softly.

"Sam, I'm afraid."

"I know."

She twisted back from the gorge. "Something kept telling me. Telling and telling and telling."

Then Sam felt the stone in his pocket, cold against his leg. He did not stop to think about it, just jammed his hand down into the pocket, drew the stone out and flung it down into the gorge against the rocks. Then he led Elena away, back toward the house.

"What will happen now?" she asked. "You killed only one of them."

Sam shook his head. "I didn't kill it. They seem to travel anywhere instantly. They can even make it rain when they please. Do you suppose they cannot protect themselves?"

"But you threw it against the rocks."

"Did you hear it crash?"

They picked their way back over the boulders to the house, where work waited; where instruments and machinery were ready for use, to till the ground, to sample air and soil.

Both Eoli and Llit appeared the next day. They did not come near nor attempt communication, but that night it rained copiously. Water rose in the river. Grass began to turn green along the edges of the river. At dawn a mist hung over the land like a giant white hand, until the sun rose to clear it away. Along the edges of the stream tracks could be seen of animals with padded feet, clawed feet, cloven hooves.

Sam Kelso began carrying a hand gun. He was taking no chances.

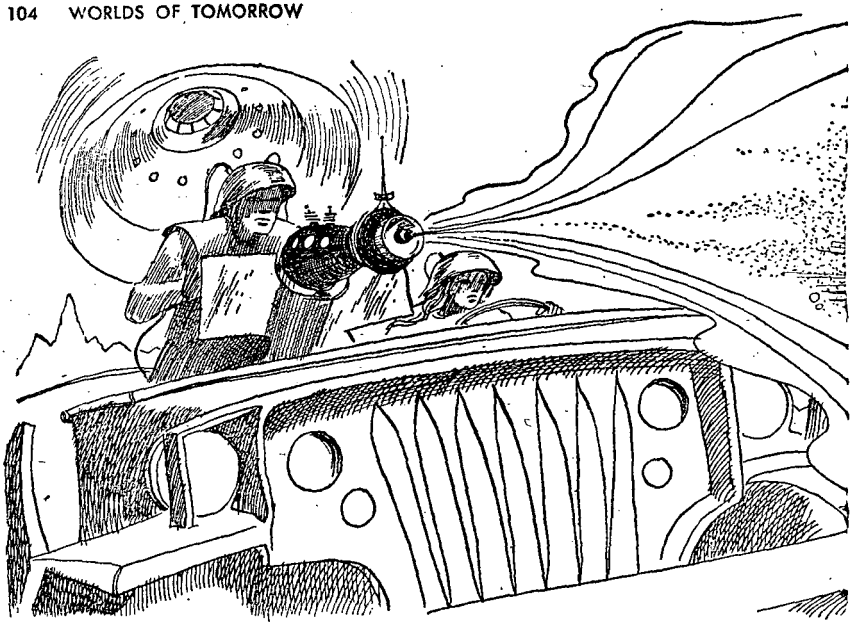
They built a sturdy cover for the doorway of the stone house. Sam replaced stones fallen long ages in the past, for their purpose in coming to this planet could not be overlooked or postponed. Within six months they would erect the communications equipment and contact Earth with their first report.

Elena began to work with him more each day. They moved all the portable equipment into the stone house. To protect the remaining, heavier machinery, Sam erected a fence around it—an invisible fence, a radiation wall through which no physical body could pass without instantly becoming dust.

"No one is going to carry it away," Elena said. "You act as if there were thieves here who would want machinery."

"Don't make the mistake of judging anything by Earth standards. I was pioneer on a planet where an animal the size of this house carried away all our machinery and stored it away in a cave fifty miles from our camp. Biggest pack rat I've ever seen."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Sam assembled the small tilling machine, standard supply for pioneer stations, designed to prepare the ground for planting. He set it to work beyond the river, adjusting the programmer to till the area he wanted, and they planted their experimental seeds.

This would be the proof. The crops would be ready when the domestic animals were grown. If the planet could support Earth-type animal life, if hidden or unknown elements, fatal to life, were absent, then—experience had shown—the planet was safe for colonization.

Elena began uncrating parts of the jeep, a small car capable of travel over rough terrain, over water, through swamps.

When she began to assemble the parts, Sam saw her working; but did not realize until several hours had passed that she had bolted them together in a random fashion.

He laughed. "You were trained to put that thing together in the dark," he said. "Why did you do that?"

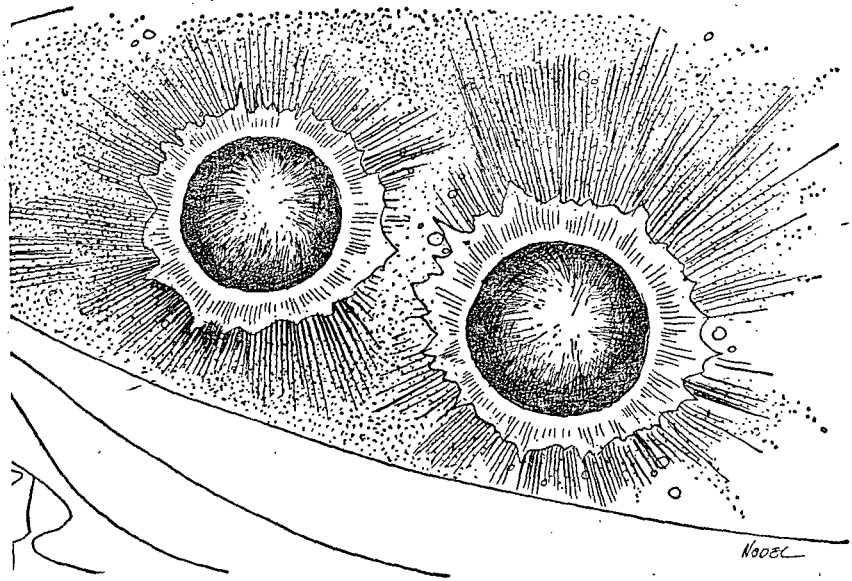
Elena began to cry.

Sam glanced around, fear running a cold finger up his spine. One of the spheres hovered in the air at eye level, not ten feet away. "Which one are you?" he cried.

"Llit."

Sam was furious. He drew his gun quickly and fired. In training, years ago, and on previous assignments, his marksmanship had been flawless. But Llit jumped at each shot as if Sam were swinging an unwieldy club and she was easily avoiding the blows. Angry, Sam threw the gun into the bushes.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



He decided that the future was too uncertain under these circumstances, although no further attempts to actually injure Elena had been made after the gorge episode. Spurred by desperation, he took metal from the jeep parts and hammered out helmets for himself and Elena, with ground wires leading to their shoes, to ground out the transmissions.

It worked. The next time the spheres appeared there was no communication. The confused crystals made signs in the air and drew symbols in the earth, but Sam and Elena were adamant.

For the first time Elena looked at Sam with something akin to affection.

Then it began to rain every night. It happened with such regularity that certain evening chores became routine because of it. Sam would build a good fire in the old fireplace against the chill. He would write in the daily log book while Elena gazed into the fire or read. They would go to bed.

Then it would begin to rain.

Sam worried about his crops. Green shoots appeared, but began to turn yellow. "Too much water," he told Elena unnecessarily. "We'll lose them."

They dug trenches beside the field, to channel the water around it, laughing as they did so. A pleasant working affection was growing between them. The crystals had stayed away now for several days. Sam began to hope that some day Elena would touch his arm and say, "I love you, Sam."

Then one morning the mistake

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which Survey had made was brought out more vividly than before.

III

They were returning from washing in the river, when Elena stopped abruptly and grabbed Sam's arm. "Look!" she cried. "The door is closed. Did you close it before we left?"

"No." They were a hundred feet from the house. "Stay here," he told her. He drew his gun and walked closer. As he did so the makeshift door was lifted and flung aside.

A hand appeared at the edge of the opening. The finger ends were bulbous and suction-cupped. A head and shoulders appeared, a human head and shoulders. The eyes were large and liquid brown, staring at them with curiosity, innocence, candor. Head, shoulders and arms were covered with fine, short white hair, like spun glass.

Elena gasped, a short, quick intake of breath. Sam jumped backward.

The creature's pink mouth opened. Eyes blinked. A low voice said, "Good morning. Can you instruct us in the assembly of this machine?"

Elena cried, "Can we *what*?"

Sam said, "He must be talking about the jeep. Some of the parts are inside."

"Correct." The creature smiled, a widening of the pink mouth.

Sam raised the gun. "Come out of there," he said firmly.

The creature's voice took on a complaining tone. "No! We've been wanting to ride for ages and ages. It is so difficult to move about. We can climb up and down rocky cliffs, but moving forward on level terrain is horrible." It made running motions with the hands.

They exchanged glances. No man could lean from a doorway like that without falling out. Elena said, "There must be suction cups at the other end, too."

Sam put his gun away to indicate that he meant no harm. "Look. This is our house. Our things are inside. We are hungry."

The head came out farther. The body was horizontal with respect to the doorway, an impossible position. "In your thinking," it said incredulously, "is this house an extension of your bodies? You must realize that the only possession one has is his body. All else—" it waved a hand to indicate earth and sky— "is communal. That is, only that which is fed by your own life fluid is yours, in the possessive sense. So you see, your concept that this house is a part of you is quite irrational."

"Just a minute!" Elena started for the house. "You can't take over the house that way."

"Come on. Help us assemble the machine. We are anxious to ride."

Sam ran up to Elena, who was heading for the house determined to evict the alien. He drew his gun again and yelled, "Listen, Fingers: I can blow a hole in you a mile wide!" He realized as he said it that the hand gun fired bullets; the beam gun was inside hanging over the fireplace.

But Fingers had disappeared inside the house. Elena, still angry, said, "Is it dangerous?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Who knows? It doesn't appear so, but remember your training. Trust no one without good reason."

"This may be his house."

"I guess it's not a matter of right," Elena said, "but survival. Without those supplies we'd be dead in a few days."

Behind them, over the river, a mist began to gather. Clouds drifted overhead, closing out the sun. Then Fingers appeared in the doorway again, hanging on with one hand fastened outside above the doorway "What *is* keeping you?" it asked irritably. "Stop this nonsense at once: Come in and help us."

"One moment," said Sam. "Our supplies are inside that house. At least give us a chance to get them out. The house is yours, I guess. But we haven't eaten breakfast yet."

The head came out farther, eyes opened wider. "Food? Oral consumption? Most interesting, but disgusting." The head shook chidingly. "We realize that you engage in this nauseating breech of etiquette to distract us, but it is very foolish to think you could distract us all at once. Come now, enough of this nonsense! We must ride."

"I have a question for you," said Sam, forcing himself to be as calm as if he were discussing the approaching rain. "How is it that you speak our language?"

The head drew up in astonishment. Another hand came out and fastened around the doorjam, placing the body in the ludicrous, impossible, lateral position. "I speak *your* language! Incredible: Either you have abilities unknown to you, or . . . no, that's impossible."

Elena laughed, looking at Sam. Then she said, "What is impossible?"

It gave them a long, searching look, while the head trembled as if Fingers had a bad case of palsy. "Is it possible to be so twisted that you actually think we speak your language?" The head shook almost uncontrollably. "This aberration, coupled with your possessive insanity, is most distressing."

Fingers stared at them sadly, large tears in the brown eyes, head trembling. "Forgive us," it said. "Our emotion may be in bad taste from your viewpoint. We are injured by your unfortunate disease. Come quickly. Help us assemble the machine. In return we will terminate your hellish misery. We have cures. It is the least we can do."

Sam said to Elena quietly, "We'll have to kill it. There is no other way."

"No, Sam! We're from Earth, remember? We don't kill just for the love of killing. Actually, he hasn't hurt us; all he wants is a ride in a jeep, and we've got to assemble it anyway."

"There's more to it than that. It is the alien semantics. His patterns are so devious that only a detailed study would help us follow his logic. And we don't have the time. Our decision now will decide the success or failure of this colony."

"Eoli has lived here for centuries. Maybe he can help."

"We'd have to take our helmets off to call him. Llit would be sure to kill us."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Well," she said at last, "I guess you're right. Let's get it done."

Sam fired three shots, quickly, trying to feel anger or hate but not succeeding. Impact. The body jerked three times.

Silence.

Sam Kelso looked at the body and did not like it. There was a sense of loss, as if a friend had died. Worse, there was a sense of betrayal.

A chill wind blew in from the east. It began to rain.

"Please get rid of it," Elena said. "I don't want to see it any more."

She turned and walked away a few steps to avoid watching him. Sam stood still. Finally she turned "What's wrong?" she asked sharply. "Get it done."

Sam opened his mouth to speak. The body moved.

"Thought he was dead," said Sam, taking his gun out again.

Elena grabbed his arm. "No!" she said. "Don't shoot!"

Sam lowered the gun. "Elena," he said, "you're shifting around. Make up your mind. This must be done."

The human head lifted. An arm came up slowly. The torso raised. Suctioned fingers fastened to the wall above the door Liquid eyes looked at them. "Do not feel badly," Fingers said. "How could you know? We are alien in your eyes. But physical pain can be obviated by us—though not instantly. It takes a moment."

Elena glanced away toward the now misty river. Her hair was wet. Rain ran down her face.

Sam was uncomfortable. "We . . . I . . . I'm sorry," he said. "We wanted to get in. It is our home, you know. At least those are our supplies. And you were trying to kill us."

"To kill? Incredible." The torso contracted. Legs and feet emerged. Fingers stood up, a man except for suction-cupped feet and hands and fine, spun-glass fur. He stepped outside, paused before a fluted pillar.

Sam Kelso thought: Murder. He's human, and that makes it murder.

"We do not understand your insanities," Fingers said. "But the universe is filled with insanities, and who can fathom all of them?"

"I'm sorry." Sam did not know why he felt the need to say it.

Fingers walked off into the brown grass. Rain fell into the depressions left by his feet. Sam and Elena followed, calling him to come back, but he neither looked back nor spoke. Heavy clouds hung like a great mantle over the river. His shambling figure was soon lost in the mist.

They stopped. "Let him go," Sam said a sadness in his eyes.

"Why do you feel this way, Sam?"

"I don't know."

"Do you suppose it has some hold on us? Mentally I mean. So it can make us feel like it chooses?"

Sam nodded agreement. Elena stepped into the house first.

This is where his hands touched, Sam thought. Here, above the entrance. He must be a mountain dweller with his suctioned feet and hands. Funny I didn't think of that before.

He saw the fluted pillar stained with blood, and he pulled a bunch

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of dry grass and wiped the pillar clean. He flung the grass behind him and looked back, up river toward the mountain, dim and hazy in the rainy light.

What a distance! What a long way to walk! Wounded, bleeding human blood with red corpuscles and white corpuscles and fluid. Sam shook his head to clear away the uncleanness he felt.

Then a voice behind him spoke, a voice he knew well by now. "Pardon me," Fingers said, "but could you do a favor for us before we . . . leave?"

Elena came out quickly at the sound of Fingers' voice. She stood beside Sam, one hand against the pillar, eyes intent, breasts rising and falling with rapid breathing.

"Please," Fingers said. "We are curious. Those . . . hoods over your heads . . . We have wondered what lies underneath. Could you, as one last favor to us . . . "

Elena said, "Of course."

Sam yelled, "No, Elena!" But it was too late. She had reached up quickly and snatched the helmet from her head.

Instantly Fingers vanished. With unexpected swiftness Elena reached over and slipped Sam's knife from its sheath at his belt. She swung it in a fierce arc to plunge it into her heart, but Sam's arm deflected the blow. He wrenched the knife from her and threw it away. Then he retrieved her helmet and placed it firmly on her head.

She stopped dead still, staring at Sam, then clung to him, sobbing.

Sam held her closely, but she soon recovered and pulled away. "I don't understand," she said. "Why did Fingers disappear when I took the helmet off?"

"Because Fingers is Llit, that's why. Apparently she couldn't maintain the physical body and control your mind at the same time."

A high-pitched whine drew close, then the sharp crack of thunder sounded overhead. Eoli appeared before them, hovering in the air, pulsing, pulsing.

Sam said to Elena, "Keep your helmet on," and removed his own.

"This must cease," Eoli said. "I've had enough of her adolescent pranks. I will not have her jeopardizing life for the first colonists this planet has seen in ten thousand years. We must find a way to stop her."

"There is a way," Sam said. "The beam gun."

Elena's eyes flashed. "No! Sam, I went along with you about killing Fingers, but not any more. There has to be a better way."

"There is," said Eoli, "but I will need help."

Sam glanced at Elena. "No thanks," he said. "I'm afraid your kind of cure would be too chaotic for us."

"But I can't do it alone!" Eoli insisted. "Let me explain. For us, intelligence is a variable characteristic, changing as the inverse of temperature. As temperature goes down, intelligence rises."

Sam said, "What is your plan?"

"Sam," Elena warned, "don't get trapped."

Eoli said, "It is very simple. We

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

must raise Llit's temperature until she cannot remember how to lower it again."

"You're talking about prison," Elena said. "I don't like Llit, but . . . well, you might as well kill her."

Eoli's thought was a long sigh of impatience. "My purpose is therapeutic. Once temperature is high enough, I can perform an . . . operation. You would call it psychiatry. Actually, it consists of a repression within the atomic matrix."

Elena looked at Sam. "If you do this, Sam," she said, "I'll . . ." She did not complete her threat.

Sam said, "What is our function in this plan?"

"The problem is control. We can change temperature, but for this operation it must be controlled within close limits. Temperature must be at least 550 degrees on your centigrade scale, but it must not go above 575, because at that temperature a rearrangement of atoms takes place. It would be fatal."

Sam went outside, helmet in hand and stood under the roof held up by the fluted pillars. The clouds were breaking up. Soon the rain would stop.

"You will do it?" Eoli had followed them.

"I don't know."

"Don't let him talk you into this," Elena said.

Sam glanced at her coldly. "If you had left your helmet on like I told you, you wouldn't have heard his proposition."

Eoli said, "Are you afraid of failure?"

"No."

"Do you think you do not have the equiptment? You do. I've examined it. Parts of the jeep, the tilling machine . . ."

"You're too nosey," Elena said shortly.

Eoli was silent, and after a moment he was gone.

IV

Elena set to work, preparing the breakfast that had already been postoned too long. Sam was very quiet during the meal, and Elena did not press him. She had said her mind.

Once though, during the meal, she looked up at him and said. "It's just as well that Llit was never mated during her lifetime. If she had been, she'd have turned out to be regular . . .

"Quiet," Sam said quickly. "Don't get her down on us again. We have enough trouble."

Then he put his dishes down carefully and walked into the patio, removed his helmet and called silently to Eoli. The whine of a bullet passed overhead. Thunder crashed in the sky. Eoli hovered before them.

Elena started. and removed her helmet. "*Must* you make so much noise?" she asked testily.

"Apologies. Apologies," Eoli answered. "Have you decided?"

"Yes."

"Sam," Elena said, "You didn't tell me."

"I refuse," Sam said to the crystal sphere.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It hovered there, ten feet away, pulsing, pulsing, but no thought reached them. It was silent so long that Sam grew restless.

Then Elena said, "Say something."

"Apologies. It is perceived that your decision is not based on Elena's opposition to the idea. Then why?"

"It may be difficult to explain. I don't like Llit, make certain you understand that. But I think the kind of therapy you have in mind would make such drastic changes in her that her personality would be completely altered. You want to make her like yourself—and I agree that it would be desirable. Now, as a race, Earthmen have held that individual personality is the most sacred treasure one has. I assume it is the same with your kind. We want to colonize this planet. But it must be on our terms, by our standards."

The pulsing grew erratic. The sphere began to frost over. This pleased Sam greatly. Eoli apparently felt the need for greater intelligence in the discussion.

"You are inconsistent," Eoli said. "You tried to kill her several times. Yet you refuse to assist in therapy to cure her."

"It is better to kill than to cripple."

"I could force you."

"Perhaps."

The pulsing grew still more erratic.

"You tread on dangerous ground. thinking you can outwit us."

"Why can you cause rain, while your mental transmission limit is less than one hundred feet? Beyond that you can cause only impressions, like your control of Elna."

"You are learning too much about us."

"I think I know," Sam went on. "It would be possible, since you can travel quite fast, for you to cause rain over a great area, although your ability to affect rain from any one position is limited. Actually, your control of anything is quite local."

"That has no bearing on the subject," Eoli said. "We were discussing Llit."

"You are wrong," Sam said. "I think it does."

With that he put his helmet back on. Elena followed suit. Eoli hovered before them an instant, then vanished.

The sky was cloudless now. Beads of rain clung to the shink grass, glistening in the sun. Birds sang in the bushes.

Sam had an enemy.

Two days later their field was torn to shreds. All the green shoots had been uprooted.

"We'll fix that," Sam told Elena in a rage. He erected a disintegrator fence around the entire field, feeding the line with power from the jeep. Then he set the tiller to work on the ground once more, leveling the small hills and valleys left by the marauder. But the earth was wet; the machine choked itself.

Then Sam noticed that no footprints were in the area. If an animal had uprooted the field, then . . . "Well, I'll be damned," he said to himself.

He ran from the field into the stone house and begun unpacking

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

boxes. He took the beam gun down from the mantle above the fireplace and mounted it on the jeep. With the gun he could burn the top off a hill six miles away, but so far he had refrained from using it.

"Now what are you up to!" Elena asked.

"I'm going to fix those plateglass bubbles once and for all!" he said grimly, lips pursed.

"Not with the gun."

"Don't worry," he said. "I'll reduce the power."

He modified the gun by enlarging the muzzle and installing a deflecting plate in the opening, directly in the center but not closing it. To do so it was necessary to use a piece of the muzzle itself, since no other available material could resist the beam. Now, instead of a beam, the gun fired a cone. The center of the cone was safe but the periphery was deadly to almost all materials. It had taken three days. He was ready.

He called Elena and explained what he had done. "I'll call them," he said. "They will come and stop in front of us, about ten or fifteen feet off the ground, because we'll be on the jeep and they always stop at eye level. The cone is narrow at the muzzle but rapidly gets larger. At this angle the cone will go through the atmosphere before it gets too weak for effectiveness. They will be trapped, because I'm certain their source of power is the atmosphere itself, and they can't go out into space beyond the end of the cone and back."

They climbed up on the jeep. Sam continued, "When they get here I'll turn it on. Then I'll remove my helmet so we can talk. Keep yours on. Take this club." He handed her a stout tree limb, two feet long, which he had prepared in advance. "If I do anything foolish, anything at all that looks like they have control of me, hit me on the head. Knock me unconcious and put my helmet back on. Understand?"

"That thing will kill them. Do you really want that?"

Sam shook his head. "The modification reduces the destructive power by a ratio of one hundred thousand to one. The beam is extremely directional, as you know, so a safe area lies in the cone's center. It will do no more than raise their temperature rapidly. Of course, if they stay in the periphery too long it would kill them."

Sam took his place behind the gun, which was mounted on a turret and could be swung 360 degrees. He slipped his helmet off and called, forcing a terrible urgency into the thought. They came. Thunder echoed in the sky; the beam gun vibrated on its mount. They stopped as Sam had predicted.

He pressed the trigger and took off.

There was confusion. Fear. The two spheres tried to move out of the cone, but dared not get too near the edge. They fled out of sight up the long cone toward space. Sam waited. Soon they returned.

"In the name of Eternity, what have you done?" they cried.

"We have learned many things," Sam said, "in our dealing with var-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ious intelligences across the galaxy. We have no wish to destroy you — but it can be arranged, if you persist in your actions. I'll admit we were vague at first about how to handle creatures such as you, but we are thinking more clearly now."

"What have you done?" they cried again. "We have made a grave mistake. We underestimated your power.

"We absolutely must come to terms," Sam said. "Now, I know that with direct contact there is no such thing as a lie. Before I turn the beam off there is one promise you must give us. And I want that promise to hold for as long as one Earthman is left on this planet,"

"And what is that promise, you spawn of Hell?"

"That you never again try to control us."

"Never," they cried enraged. Again they fled up the long cone toward space. Again they returned. Again their beams lashed out, trying to break the cone. The gun shuddered. To demonstrate the gun's destructive power he lowered the beam and burned a slash across the earth as far as the horizon.

Finally they stopped. A violent debate arose between them. Sam could see both spheres frost over. Then they agreed to his demands.

Sam listened to them carefully, watching for an indication that they might be lying. Finally he was satisfied. He released the trigger.

But Sam had forgotten one important factor. Elena, with her helmet on, did not hear the argument. She interpreted his act as evidence that the crystals had gained control of his mind. She swung the club with all her might.

When Sam regained consciousness he was lying in the jeep, his helmet securely in place. Elena manned the gun. The spheres had escaped the cone during the few seconds it was turned off and were now trying to avoid getting trapped again. Elena, hair disheveled under her helmet, blouse torn, was swinging the muzzle back and forth, swearing bitterly, sobbing. Her face was dirty, eyes were on fire. Her lips trembled.

Sam leapt to his feet and turned the gun off. He snatched the helmet from her head, and removed his own. "I'm sorry," he said to the spheres, "I forgot to tell her about the agreement."

They were laughing. "It was not difficult to avoid the cone, when we knew its danger. A marvelous female! She has developed an explosive love for you, like two planets crashing in space."

"Sam!" Elena cried, "Have you lost your mind?"

Eoli said, "You already have our promise not to touch your minds again. Is there more you wish?"

"The rain. There is too much of it."

"Impossible. When Llit is lonely it rains. We cannot expect her to maintain control over her emotions."

"She can move," said Elena. "Let her rain somewhere else."

"Yes," Llit said, delighted at the prospect of Elena's love. "That can be arranged."

"I'm sorry for your trouble," Elena said, "I wish there was some-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thing we could do."

"There is," Eoli said quickly. "The therapy."

Llit said "Therapy?"

Sam said, "Now don't start that again."

"Well," Eoli agreed. "Perhaps later, when you understand us better. It is certainly a fact that we misunderstood you at the beginning. It was concluded, since Earthmen permit computers to choose their wives, that your race had not yet learned the ABC's of human relationships. How were we to know that your patterns were so well formed that so simple a fact as man and woman love could be taken for granted even by your machines?"

"Don't talk about love!" Llit said, pulsing rapidly.

"We have men," Sam said, "who are well versed in micro-micro-electronics. Perhaps when they arrive we may help her."

"You *have*?" Eoli asked, "Is it true?"

"Yes."

Both spheres disappeared.

Soon, very soon, a huge ship appeared in the sky, rapidly descending. "Why, that's our ship," Elena said. "But it should be reaching Earth by this time!"

The ship landed on the knoll beside the stone house. The hatch opened. The captain stepped out. "We were held captive," he said. "Three thousand miles out in orbit. The ship is in perfect operating order. There is a force out there I don't understand."

The spheres appeared before them. Sam looked at them accusingly. "Yes," they said, "we are guilty. You see, we had to know first if you could be trusted with such a marvelous planet as this. If you failed . . . well, they could not be permitted to bring others here."

The captain said, "What the hell's going on?"

Sam told him. Then Eoli said, "Is he the one who will help Llit?"

"No. Those men are still on earth. But they will come."

Llit said, "Come, Eoli. Let us be off." They left, thinking of Sam and Elena.

Sam, the pioneer—and his wife—waited impatiently for the ship to be gone, so they could be alone.

END

In the new *Galaxy*—

GRANDMOTHER EARTH by J. T. McIntosh

SHAMAR'S WAR by Kris Neville

And the thrilling conclusion of

THE STAR KING by Jack Vance

February *Galaxy* on sale now—get your copy today!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHEN THE STARS ANSWER

BY T. K. BROWN III

Do they know what they're doing at Green Bank? — or is this what happens next?

This is an account of events some of which have already taken place and the rest of which are going to take place. They may not happen *exactly* as they are set down here. But *in essence* they will—you can take our word for that. It's the only way things can possibly work out.

First comes the factual part:

And it goes way back to 1931, when a certain Dr. Karl Jansky got the crazy idea of using a large radio antenna to find out if any radio signals were reaching New Jersey from outer space. Right on the face of it you can see what a ridiculous notion *that* was. You'd think the Bell Telephone Co. would know better than to hire a screwball like that.

So, anyway, after Dr. Jansky detected in this fashion what he called "cosmic static," people began to wonder what it could be, where it came from and so on. To find out, they built radiotelescopes—huge rotatable metal dishes that catch and focus radio waves. They liked to build them at places with "bank" in their names. The University of Manchester built one at Jodrell Bank, England, and we built one at Green Bank, W. Va. With these giant listening devices the astronomers heard broadcasts of static from our sun, from planets and from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

points very far away, far beyond our solar system, far beyond our galaxy.

By now we are up to 1951, when two Harvard professors made an interesting discovery. The universe has its own wave length—1420 megacycles, the characteristic radio emission line of neutral hydrogen. Beneath all the spluttering and beeping and yowling of the incidental static, neutral hydrogen maintains its steady drone through the length and breadth of space.

This fact gave scientists an exciting idea. If there were intelligent beings on other plants, and if they were trying to establish contact with other worlds, they would do so by broadcasting a radio message of some sort on the 1420 mc. frequency —asking, in effect, "Are you there?" Obviously the thing to do was to listen for such messages. Nothing might come from such listening; on the other hand, the rewards could be inconceivably high. For, as one prominent astrophysicist pointed out:

"Since we have only in the last few years attained the capability of listening for broadcasts from space, it is evident that no one of less technological development can be sending them. The chances are overwhelming that the exosociety will be found to be made up of beings vastly superior to ourselves." And Dr. Harold Urey added approval: "Contact with *them* would be the most magnificent thing one can imagine!"

Animated by the same enthusiasm, Dr. Frank B. Drake, on Dr. Otto Struve's staff at Green Bank, instituted in 1960 Project Ozma, devoted to the monitoring of nearby stars. Astronomers at Swarthmore College had already catalogued and analyzed the fifty-six stars within sixteen light years of the sun. Of them, thirty-one are single bodies (not twinned or tripleted) and seven are very sunlike in size, brilliance, and composition. Dr. Drake turned his listening devices on two of these, Tau Ceti and Epsilon Eridani.

That brings us more or less up to date. What follows is merely the most self-evident sort of extrapolation.

The monitoring of Tau Ceti and Epsilon Eridani continued to yield negative results. So did that of Alpha Centauri, Epsilon Indi, and 70 Ophiuchi. Eventually the obvious idea occurred to one of the staff: "Perhaps our neighbors are so far ahead of us, and have been broadcasting for so many thousands of years, that they have given up and are merely listening, counting on the new member of the family — us — to make its presence known. It is up to us to do the broadcasting."

Accordingly, in the year 1963, narrow cones of radio emission were beamed at the seven most likely nearby stars. The signal was a sequence of beeps unmistakably identifiable by the exosociety as the product of rational effort. Then, of course, began the long wait—nine years at the least for the signal to reach the star; many times that if the star were farther away or the message not immediately picked up.

It was, as it happened, in 1985,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

twenty-two years after the inception of this program, and just as the Americans were preparing to send the first rocket with passengers to Mars, that the answer came—not as an electromagnetic impulse (which was the most anyone had dreamed of) but in the form of a sphere, forty-two feet in diameter: a space ship that appeared spectacularly a hundred miles above the earth, broadcast (1050 kc.) in perfect English the statement that it intended to land in a field near Davenport, Iowa, and did so the next day at noon.

The ship was met by a deputation in which atomic cannon and heavy tanks mingled strangely with TV cameras and a party from the Department of State in frock coats. From the craft there emerged a creature who, to the astonishment of absolutely everyone, resembled *Homo sapiens* (if we may still use that term) to the last detail, except for a forehead that bulged enough to house about 200 cc. more forebrain, and who furthermore was dressed in the latest Western fashion, including button-down collar. The space ship closed behind him. He advanced to meet the delegation of generals and State Department men who had stepped forward, rather gingerly, when it appeared that he was unarmed.

"Congratulate me, gentlemen," the spaceman said, "on being the first person from our society to attempt interstellar flight, and on bringing the attempt to such a successful conclusion."

There was a lively suspicion among the Americans that the whole thing was a Russian hoax, designed to steal the spotlight from the Mars shot. Consequently, their formalities were rather perfunctory and they got right down to a number of questions regarding 1) his English, 2) his clothing, behind which lay the thinly veiled and sneering implication that he was a phony.

"I did not wish to make too bizarre a first impression," he said. "Therefore I cruised above your planet for a day, watching your television." He shuddered visibly. Indeed, now that he mentioned it, they noticed that his diction betrayed a familiarity with the fruity and slightly hysterical cadences of the hard sell. "From these observations it was no problem to get the hang of your language, and with the materials I had on board my robots were able to tailor a reasonable facsimile of your clothing." He laughed. "It was just as well. On our planet we go naked."

The scientists were overjoyed to learn that they had established contact with a being capable of learning perfect English in a day. The next questions, needless to say, concerned his native whereabouts. It transpired that his planet circled 61 Cygni, in the constellation Swan, an inconspicious star of 5.6 magnitude, 10.9 light years distant. The astrophysicist in the group, adding together the eleven years it had taken the earth signal to reach 61 Cygni and the eleven years it had taken the space ship to make its journey, was stupefied to realize that it must

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have traveled at the speed of light.

"Oh, yes," the visitor said, in answer to his question, "our ships travel at that speed. Right now we're tussling with a nasty technical problem—the light barrier, you know."

"Our physicists," the scientist said faintly, "believe that the speed of light is an absolute that cannot be exceeded."

"Well, of course we know better than that," the spaceman said. "It's just a matter of getting up the power; and then, to be sure, finding out what's on the other side. Matter of fact, when it was decided that I should take part in a 'first,' I was given the choice of that project or this one. I'm afraid I chose the easy one."

The astrophysicist had another question. "Why is it, with your tremendous resources, that you have not been sending out messages, as we have, to make the acquaintance of your neighbors?"

"Oh," he said, "that was not felt to be prudent. Oh, no indeed, not wise at all."

The State Department chief suggested that they get into the car and head back toward the center of things. The spaceman readily agreed. (Already, thanks to radio and television, the world knew him by nickname—Siggy, the man from 61 Cygni.) Showing the keenest interest in everything about him, he got into the back seat and they started off with motorcycles fore and aft.

"Still using internal combustion, eh?" he said. "How quaint! And wheels! How perfectly charming! That reminds me—have you heard this one? What a silly question. Anyway, it seems that there were these two astronauts—"

And he went on to tell a joke of which the humor was so acute, so penetrating, so absolutely out of this world, that the very proper State Department man, laughing and screaming, got out of control and died, right there in the back seat.

"*So* sorry," said Siggy. "And I'd already seen on TV what you people will laugh at. I'll have to be more careful."

The U.S.S.R. made frantic efforts to have Siggy declared a ward of the United Nations, but this maneuver was foiled and he vanished into the entrails of the Pentagon where he received the V.I.P. treatment and where the most concerted labors were applied to picking his brains, while others were devoting all their ingenuity to getting inside his space ship—in vain. But Siggy was most cooperative in the Pentagon. He manifested an astounding intelligence, as far superior to yours and mine as ours is superior to a cat's. Nor was he a bit reluctant to divulge whatever information was solicited of him. This fact was reassuring; for surely, if his intent were inimical, he would not be so free with his insights.

"It doesn't matter in the least," he said genially. "Would you like to know how to live 1000 years, the way we do?" And he told.

Within a week, as he chattered on, the United States came into possession of the knowledge of how to amplify light, transport living crea-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tures by radio, read minds at any distance, square the circle, intercept any missile, neutralize any explosion (so that all it did was go poof), and use the H-bomb to trigger a superbomb of such devastating power that one alone would be sufficient to reduce the continent of Asia to ashes. And much more. In short, the United States was without any question the master of the world. A note was dispatched to the U.S.S.R. to this effect, dwelling with perhaps unnecessary smugness on the fact that, since the United States had shown the initiative to bring the visitor from 61 Cygni, the United States should properly reap the benefits. The U.S.S.R. was instructed to do this, that and the other—or else.

The day was now approaching for the American trip to Mars. Though much of the zest had been taken from this enterprise by recent events, there was no question of not going through with it, particularly since some of the information received from Siggy, and applied to the project, made success a foregone conclusion.

It was only natural that the visitor should be the guest of honor at the launching. He was transported with much ceremony and much picture-taking of the site. There was a review of the guard of honor and several speeches were delivered, followed by a salute to the colors during the National Anthem. Then the party of dignitaries and technicians entered the control building for the count-down. It must be admitted that Siggy was very polite about the whole thing—rather like the grown-up who is humoring the kids by watching the Erector derrick pick up the wooden block.

"Very ingenious," he said, as he surveyed the towering missile.

"It must seem extremely primitive to you," the operations chief said modestly, "but you must admit that it represents the product of much sophisticated thinking."

"Oh, very definitely," Siggy replied.

"The missile is completely automated," the scientist continued, "so we are not concerned actually, whether it will get there or not. We *know* it will get there, and back."

"Why, of course it will," said Siggy. "No doubt of that whatsoever."

"What we are investigating really," the scientist went on, "is the reaction of the passengers during the flight. How they respond to many weeks of weightlessness, exposure to cosmic bombardment and extremes of temperature. How their reflexes are affected by the unfamiliar conditions."

"Well, I certainly know how important that is," Siggy said, chuckling politely.

"Our instruments will tell us all we want to know about respiration, heartbeat, metabolism, reaction time to stimuli, and so on."

"You certainly have been thorough," Siggy said. "I must say, you fellows have done a simply splendid job."

"Thank you," the scientist replied. He pushed a button and the monkeys were led out toward the space

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vehicle. Each wore a special suit and helmet. Each arched its tail behind its back.

"Now isn't that absolutely phenomenal!" Siggy exclaimed. "Surely," he said to the scientist and, turning, to the others as well, "surely this allows us to make a valid generalization about the basic working mechanisms of intelligence, wherever it may occur in the universe at whatever level."

The scientist paused. "I'm not sure that I quite follow your meaning."

"Why," Siggy said, "this apparently innate instinct to send the inferior creature on ahead, to explore the way."

"Well, yes," the scientist said. "It was for us self-evident—and I am happy to see that our minds seem to work in the same way—self-evident that the first attempt—"

The President's deputy interrupted.

"Didn't you tell us when you landed," he asked carefully, "—surely my recollection deceives me—but didn't you say that you were the *first* to make an interstellar flight from your planet?"

"Yes, that's right," Siggy said "That's just what I mean, don't you see? Sending the inferior creature on ahead."

There was a long silence.

"You mean," the deputy said, "that *you* are the inferior creature?"

"But of course," Siggy said. "Why should They take the risk? They have us."

The silence now was very long.

"They?" the scientist said.

"But I thought you understood," Siggy said courteously. "Didn't I make that clear? But it's so obvious! How could I have given you all that information if it made any difference? Goodness, I do hope I haven't upset you in some way."

Another silence, even longer.

"They?" the scientist repeated.

"We are Their—well, Their domesticated animals," Siggy said. "Their minds are so much greater than ours that we haven't even been able to figure out Their language. They don't have to vocalize, of course. They function on a different level. They sent me out ahead, to explore—to run the risk." He made a gesture. "Like those monkeys. I've already sent back my report, of course. That's the job they gave me to do."

"And then?" the deputy whispered.

"Why, then They will move in," Siggy said. "They'll be here in twenty-two years. Maybe sooner," he added somberly, "if they've cracked the light barrier since I left."

In 1986, if you follow the sound of the dull thuds to the special little building in Central Park, pay your dollar and get in line, you will in time reach the inner chamber. There, bending over and presenting his behind, is a man in his late fifties. There, like the thousands of others, you will be privileged to kick him in it, just as hard as you can. His name is Ignatius Fitzhugh Crespi, and he is the mental giant who dreamed up the idea of shouting "Are you there?" at our neighbors. END

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A MESSAGE FROM LOKI

BY JAMES BLISH

We can't see the surface of Jupiter — if it has one — but perhaps we can start mapping it, all the same!

One of the most disturbing features of the Great Red Spot of Jupiter is its permanence. It is not always red, but it is always there; even Galileo saw it.

Existing explanations of what the Spot might be—and there are none that satisfy all astronomers—all come croppers on the fact of the Spot's permanence and its relative stability of position. This enormous body (or whatever it is) is visible at the top of an atmosphere about 8000 miles deep, and it rotates with the planet. This means that it stays at approximately the same location without

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

being attached to the surface, year in and year out, decade after decade.

One of the most frequent explanations, for example, is that the spot might be an enormous block of ice, tainted with sodium to account for its color. Such an airborne glacier might have the mechanical strength to stay together under Jovian conditions, and it's not hard to postulate conditions under which it might float. But why doesn't it drift?

The puzzle is further complicated by the existence of another "spot" on Jupiter, less often mentioned because it is not quite so spectacular. This is called the South Tropical Disturbance (and usually thereafter, the STD), and is quite as big as the northernly Red Spot but seldom shows any color. It differs from the Spot, too, in that it *does* drift, and when it passes the Spot, as it does rather periodically, the weather on Jupiter turns from atrocious (its usual state) to ferocious.

This, you will note, is normal behavior for an atmospheric feature, especially if the atmosphere in question is being carried around its planet at speeds of up to 25,000 miles per hour, but the Spot itself doesn't behave in this way. And yet the Spot is roughly three times as long in longitude as it is in latitude, which *is* just what you would expect of an atmospheric feature, from streaming or pressure distortion (and so is the STD).

I suspect that the answer to this question lies in a paper published back in 1923, when I was two years old and not reading much. The author was Sir Geoffery Taylor. He was able to show that under very high wind velocities, even a very small hill or other bump in the topography will produce a long, slanting funnel or "Taylor column" in the air, reaching from the topographical feature to the top of the cloud layer. The center of the column is stagnant, and there is virtually no mixing between the column and the surrounding atmosphere.

The pertinent math of Taylor columns as applied to Jupiter was worked out in *Nature* by R. Hyde in 1961, and the results are fascinating, accounting for a great deal more than just the Great Red Spot itself. Taylor gives a formula whereby the height of the object on the surface can be calculated:

$$h = ad(U/L \text{ Omega}),$$

where a=1 and hence serves no purpose that I can see, d=the diameter of the planet, U is the characteristic wind speed in the vicinity of the bump, L is a typical horizontal measurement of the bump and Omega is the angular speed of rotation of the solid planet to which the bump is fixed.

We already know the speed of rotation of Jupiter, which is 1.5×10^{-4} radii per second, so that gives us Omega. The wind speed, U, is a quite constant two meters a second. Let us then suppose that the bump at the bottom is a little smaller than the Spot in its longitudinal measurements: 25,000 kilometers long by 12,000 km wide is a reasonable assumption.

This gives us a height for Spot Mountain. One kilometer is 0.62137

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

miles, a figure so awkward as to be a good and sufficient argument all in itself for dropping the English system of measurement; and so Spot Mountain, which comes out at six kilometers high, has a height of 19,684 feet. Mt. McKinley, the highest peak in North America, is 20,320 feet high; Spot Mountain, in contrast, to this, is not quite as high as Mt. Logan.

However, since Spot Mountain is also 15,530 miles long and 7,760 miles wide, it can't properly be thought of as a mountain, but rather as an enormous plateau. You could set the Earth down on it very nicely, and it wouldn't stick up above the Jovian atmosphere.

Similar doodling for the STD, which I won't inflict upon you here, suggests that its corresponding surface feature is lower, which accounts nicely for the STD's drifting. Furthermore, the exterior turbulence which accompanies a Taylor column accounts for another atmospheric feature across the Jovian equator from the Red Spot, usually called the Red Spot Hollow. Finally, the interaction of these colossal permanent cyclones with the ionosphere may well produce the intense bursts of radio noise which have been recorded from Jupiter.

But the theory has other interesting implications. If the Spot and the STD are indeed Taylor columns —messages from Loki, the god of the underworld—then they offer the possibility of a rough map of the surface of Jupiter. For example, the theory tells us that if "h" exceeds the value given by the equation, no Taylor column will form because the air can't get over the surface feature—or, in blunter words, Spot Mountain has to be the highest point on Jupiter's surface. And its location can be figured from the normal slant of a Taylor column at the given wind velocity.

Smaller bumps would produce temporary columns, and hence temporary spots in the cloud-cover, which could be treated in the same way. Such spots have in fact often been observed. Very shallow features, on the other hand, don't form Taylor columns because friction gets in the way; so our weatherman's map of Jupiter would at best be pretty rough.

It's fun to speculate on what kind of a thing Spot Mountain—or perhaps it ought to be called Mt. Hyde —really is. According to the standard Rupert Wilde model for gas-giant planets, it cannot be rock, and is much more likely to be ice. At the temperatures and pressures prevailing 8,000 miles down, an ice mountain would behave like an enormously viscous fluid, permanent over the very brief period that we have been observing Jupiter, but actually constantly creeping counter to the rotation of the planet.

Indeed, it's an open question whether there has been time since the creation of the solar system for Jovian geology and topography to settle down. That may not happen until millions of years after humanity and the Earth itself have forgotten that they were ever born—or it may never happen at all.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nevertheless, from the human point of view Spot Mountain could be called a permanent feature, and it offers a further possibility that modern science-fiction writers find annoyingly difficult to come by on Jupiter:

A landing place.

Consider first of all that it would be extremely difficult to miss. Secondly, it is connected to the top of the atmosphere by a huge column of *quiet* gases. This means that a ship going in for a landing is not going to be buffeted by 25,000 knot gales, and that there will be a sizable landing field for it where the air will also be relatively quiet.

Of course, you'll still have to watch out for the van Allen belts, which are intense around Jupiter. You won't have to worry about Jupiter's "crushing gravitation"—you may have experienced worse in driving a car—but designing a ship to resist a million atmospheres of pressure may not be easy.

On second thought, I think I'll be content just to point the way, and wave good-by when you go.

Mind your hats going down!

END

Coming Tomorrow

One of the things that science fiction does particularly well is to permit a really objective look at mankind—what Harlow Shapley calls "The View from a Distant Star."

In next issue's lead story we have a more remote, more objective view of mankind than we've been privileged to present in a long time. It deals with some extremely basic phenomena—not religion, not morals, but the underlying physical qualities that formed our religion and our morals—and we have an idea that some people will find it difficult to take.

Let's put it this way: If you're a sensitive soul, don't buy the next *Worlds of Tomorrow*! And if you do happen to buy it, by all means don't read the complete short novel by Brian W. Aldiss which leads it off, *The Dark Light-Years*!

But if you're fortunate enough not to have a queasy stomach, we think you'll find it as we did—challenging . . . stimulating . . . a story you are not likely to forget!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE TRANSCENDENT TIGERS

BY R. A. LAFFERTY

ILLUSTRATED BY GAUGHAN

The difficult things she did at once. The merely impossible—were easy!

This was the birthday of Carnadine Thompson. She was seven years old. Thereby she left her childhood behind her, and came into the fullness of her powers. This was her own phrase, and her own idea of the importance of the milestone.

There were others, mostly adult, who thought that she was a peculiarily backward little girl in some ways, though precocious in others.

She received for her birthday four presents: a hollow white rubber ball, a green plastic frog, a red cap and a little wire puzzle.

She immediately tore the plastic frog apart, considering it a child's toy. So much for that.

She put on the cap, saying that it had been sent by her Genie as a symbol of her authority. In fact none of them knew who had sent her the red cap. The cap is important. If it weren't important, it wouldn't be mentioned.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Carnadine quickly worked the wire puzzle, and then unworked it again. Then she did something with the hollow white rubber ball that made her mother's eyes pop out. Nor did they pop all the way in again when Carnadine undid it and made it as it was before.

Geraldine Thompson had been looking popeyed for a long time. Her husband had commented on it; and she had been to the doctor for it. No medical reason was found, but the actual cause was some of the antics of her daughter Carnadine.

"I wonder if you noticed the small wire puzzle that I gave to my daughter," said Tyburn Thompson to his neighbor, H. Horn.

"Only to note that it probably cost less than a quarter." said Horn, "and to marvel again at the canny way you have with coin. I wouldn't call you stingy, Tyburn. I've never believed in the virtues of understatement. You have a talent for making stingy people seem benevolent."

"I know. Many people misunderstand me. But consider that wire object. It's a very simple-appearing puzzle, but it's twenty-four centuries old. It is unworkable, of course, so it should keep Carnadine occupied for some time. She has excess of energy. This is one of the oldest of the unworkable puzzles."

"But, Tyburn, she just worked it," said his wife Geraldine.

"It is one of the nine impossible apparatus puzzles listed by Anaximandros in the fifth century before the common era," continued Tyburn. "And do you know? In all the centuries since then, there have been only two added to the list."

"Carnadine," said her mother. "Let me see you work that again."

So she worked it again.

"The reason it is unworkable," said Tyburn, "though apparent to me as a design engineer, may not be so readily apparent to you. It has to do with odds and evens of lays. Many of the unworkable classic puzzles are cordage puzzles, as is this actually. It is a wire miniature of a cordage puzzle. It is said that this is the construction of the Gordian Knot. The same thing, however, is said of two other early unworkable cordage puzzles."

"But she just worked it, Tyburn, twice."

"Stop chattering, Geraldine! I am explaining something to Horn. Men have spent years on this puzzle, the Engineering Mind and the recognition of patent impossibility being less prevalent in past centuries. And this, I believe, is the best of all the impossible ones. It is misleading. It looks as though there would surely be a way to do it."

"I just believe that I could do it, Tyburn."

"No, you surely could not. You are a stubborn man, and it'd drive you crazy. It's quite impossible. You would have to take it into another dimension to work it, and then bring it back."

Carnadine once more did something to the hollow rubber ball.

"How did you make the rubber ball turn red and then white again, Carnadine?" her mother asked her.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Turned it inside out. It's red on the inside."

"But how did you turn it inside out without tearing it?"

"It'd spoil it to tear it, mama."

"But it's impossible to turn it inside out without tearing it."

"Not if you have a red cap it isn't."

"Dear, how do you work that puzzle that your father says can't be worked?"

"Like this."

"Oh, yes. I mean, how does it happen that you can work it when nobody else could ever work it before?"

"There has to be a first time for everything, mama."

"Maybe, but there has to be a first-class explanation to go with that first time."

"It's on account of the red cap, mama. With this cap I can do anything."

So Carnadine Thompson in the fullness of her powers, and in her red cap, went out to find the rest of the Bengal Tigers. This was the most exclusive society in the world. It had only one full member, herself, and three contingent or defective members, her little brother Eustace, Fatty Frost, and Peewee Horn. Children all three of them, the oldest not within three months of her age.

The Bengal Tigers was not well known to the world at large, having been founded only the day before. Carnadine Thompson was made First Stripe for life. There were no other offices.

Yet, for a combination of reasons, the Bengal Tigers now became the most important society in the world. The new power was already in being. It was only a question of what form it would take, but it seemed to show a peculiar affiliation for this esoteric society.

Clement Chardin, writing in *Bulletin de la Societe Parahistorique Francaise,* expressed the novel idea:

> It is no longer a question whether there be transcendent powers. These have now come so near to us that the aura of them ruffles our very hair. We are the objects of a Visitation. The Power to Move Mountains and Worlds is at hand. The actuality of the visitation is proved, though the methods of the detection cannot now be revealed.
>
> The question is only whether there is any individual or group with the assurance to grasp that Power. It will not be given lightly. It will not come to craven or contabescent. There is the sad possibility that there may be none ready in the World to receive the Power. This may not be the first Visitation, but it may well be the last. But the Power, whatever its form and essence (it is real, its presence has been detected by fine instrumentation), the Power, the Visitation may pass us by as unworthy.

This parenthetical, for those who may not have read it in the journal.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

That which struck just West of Kearney, Nebraska was an elemental force. The shock of it was heard around the world, and its suction flattened farmhouses and barns for miles.

The area of the destruction was an almost perfect circle about two miles in diameter, so just over two thousand acres were destroyed. The first reports said that it was like no disaster ever known. Later reports said that it was like every disaster ever known; and it did have points of resemblance to them all.

There was a great crater as though a meteorite had struck; there was the intense heat and contamination as though it had been of fissionable origin; there was an after-flow of lava and great ash clouds as though it were the super-volcanic explosion of another Krakatoa. There was the sudden silence of perhaps two seconds physically, and perhaps two hours as to human response. And then the noise of all sorts.

The early reports said that the hole was three miles deep. That was said simply to have a figure, and to avoid panic. It was not known how deep the hole was.

But it was very much more than three miles — before the earthquake had begun to fill and mask it — before the hot magma had oozed up from its bottom to fill those first miles. It was still very much more than three miles deep after the rapid gushing had declined to a slow wax-like flowing.

Had anyone heard the preceding rush or seen meteor or any other flying object? No. There hadn't been a sound, though there had been something pitched a little higher than sound.

There hadn't been meteor or flying ball. But there had been what some called a giant shaft of light, and others a sheen of metal: a thing too big to be believed and gone too soon to be remembered.

One farmer said that it was the point of a giant needle quickly becoming more than a mile thick, and a hundred thousand miles long.

Did he know how to judge distances? Certainly, he said, I know how to judge distances. It is ninety yards to that tree; it is seven hundred yards to that windmill. That crow is flying at right onto eighty yards above the earth, though most would guess it higher. And that train whistle is coming from a distance of five and one-quarter miles.

But did he know how to judge great distances? Did he know how far was a hundred thousand miles? Certainly, he said, a great distance is easier to judge than a small, and that sudden bright shaft was one hundred thousand miles long.

The farmer was the only one who offered any figures. Few had seen it at all. And all who had seen it, maintained that it had lasted only a fraction of a second.

"There should be something to take the minds of the people from the unexplained happening near Kearney, Nebraska," said a group of advisors of national status. "It will not be good for too much notice to be taken of this event until we have an explanation for it."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fortunately something did take place to take the minds of the people from the unusual happening near Kearney. What took their minds from the unusual happenings in Nebraska were the happenings at or near Hanksville, Utah, Crumpton, Maryland, Locust Bayou, Arkansas, and Pope City, Georgia. All of these sudden destructions were absolutely similar in type and vague in origin. National panic now went into the second stage, and it was nearly as important to halt it as to solve the disasters themselves.

And what in turn took the minds of the people off of these disasters were the further disasters at Highmore, South Dakota, Lower Gilmore, New Hampshire, Cherryfork, Ohio, and Rowesville, South Carolina.

And what took the minds of the people off of these later disasters were still further disasters at — but this could go on and on.

And it did.

So with the cataclysmal disasters erupting over the country like a rash, there wasn't a large audience for the academic discussions about the New Potential of Mankind. There were those, concerned about the current catastrophes, who said that Mankind might not last long enough to receive the New Potential or anything else.

But Winkers wrote from the long viewpoint, paying no more attention to the destructions than if they were a string of firecrackers, such not being in his field:

It is paradoxical that we know so much and yet so little about the Power Imminent in the world: the Visitation, the Poyavlenie, as it is now called internationally.

It has been detected, but in ways twice removed. An earlier statement that it had been detected by instrumentation is inaccurate, but there is no other statement that would have been intelligible to the public. It has not been detected by instrumentation, but by para-instrumentation. This is the infant science of gathering data from patterns of failure by instruments, and of making deductions from those failure patterns. What our finest instruments fail to detect is at least as important as what they do detect. In some cases it is more so. The patterns of failure when confronted with the thesis of the Visitation have been varied, but they had not been random. There appears to be a validity to the deductions from the patterns.

The characteristics of the Power, the Visitation, as projected by these methods (and always considered in the Oeg-Hornbostel framework) is that it is *Aculeiform, Homodynamous, Homochiral,* and (here the intelligence reels with disbelief, yet I assure the reader that I write in deadly seriousness) *Homoeotelutic.*

For there is a verbal element to it, incredible as it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seems. This raises old ghosts. It is almost as if we hear the returning whisper of primitive magic and fetish. It is as if we were dealing with the *Logos*, the word that was before the world. But where are we to find the logic of the *Logos?*

Truly the most puzzling aspect of all is this verbal element detected in it, even if thus remotely. Should we believe that it operates homeopathically through some sort of witches' rhyming chant? That might be an extreme conclusion, since we know it only by the implication. But when we consider all the above in the light of Laudermilk's hypothesis, we are tempted to a bit of non-scientific apprehension.

How powerful is the Power? We do not know. We cannot equate it in dynes. We can only compare effect with effect, and here the difference is so great that comparison fails. We can consider the effect of the Titter-Stumpf Theory, or of the Krogman-Keil Projection on Instrumentation and Para-Instrumentation. And we can consider this, and humbly murmur, "Very Powerful Indeed."

Carnadine Thompson had begun to read the newspapers avidly. This was unexpected, since reading was her weak point. She had had so much trouble with the story of the Kitten and the Bell in the First Reader that her mother had come to believe that she had no verbal facility at all. This had been belied a moment later when Carnadine had torn the offending pages out of the reader and told her mother and the world just what they could do with that kitten, and told it with great verbal facility. But it seemed that for reading she had none.

But now she read everything she could find on the new disasters that had struck the country, read it out loud in a ringing voice in which the names of the destroyed places were like clanging bells.

"How come you can read the paper so well, Carnadine?" her mother asked her. "How do you know how to say the names?"

"Oh, it's no great trick, mama. You just tie into the stuff and let go. Crumpton! Locust Bayou! Pope City! Cherryfork! Rowesville!"

"But how can you read all those hard names in the paper when you couldn't even read the story about the little kitten?"

"Mama, with things going the way they are, I think there's a pretty good chance that that damned kitten will get what's coming to her."

Far out, very far out, there was a conversation.

This was on a giant world of extreme sophistication and non-dependence on matter. It was such a world as those on which Laudermilk's hypothesis was built. That such a world existed, even in a contingent sense, was a triumph for Laudermilk.

"Then you have invested one?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

asked Sphaeros, an ancient rotundity on that advanced world.

"I have invested one," said Acu, the eager young sharpy, and bowed his forehead to the floor. The expression is figurative, since there was neither forehead nor floor on that world.

"And you are certain that you have invested the correct one?"

"Naturally I am not certain. Every investure may not be successful, and every seed may not grow. One learns by experience, and this is my first experience on such a mission. I examined much of that world before I found this person. I thought first that it would be among the masters of the contrapuntal worlds, for even there they have such and masters of such. But none of these — called by themselves actors and impresarios and promoters and hacks — none of these qualified. None had the calm assurance that is the first requisite. What assurance they had was of another sort, and not valid. Also their contrapuntal worlds were not true creations in our sense, not really worlds at all."

"Then where did you look?" asked Sphaeros.

"I looked to the heads of the apparatus. On retarded worlds there is often an apparatus or government. On that world there were many. But the leaders of these, though most showed an avidity for power, did not show the calm assurance that should go with power. Their assurance, if it could be called such, was of an hysterical sort. Also most were personally of a venal sort, so I rejected them."

"And then?"

"Then I explored remote possibilities. Those who employ in their work a certain power over another species — jockeys, swineherds, beekeepers, snake-charmers. What I looked for I didn't find with them, the perfect assurance of the truly superior being."

"And then?"

"Then I went onto instruments, not trusting my own judgment. I set the Calm Assurance Indicator on automatic and cruised about the world. After all, that is why I was provided with the Indicator.

"And on that whole world I found only one person with perfect assurance, one impervious to doubt of any kind and totally impervious to self-doubt. On this one I made the Investure and conferred the concept of great power and sharpness."

"You have made a mistake. Fortunately it is not a great mistake, as it is not a great world. You were too anxious to make a good showing on your first attempt. When nothing can be found you should leave that world. On very many nothing can be found. Assurance is not the only quality that makes up this competence. It is simply the quality for which we look first on alien spheres. The one on whom you made the investure, though full of assurance, was not full of other qualities nearly as important. It was in fact a pupa form, a child of the species, known locally as a kid. Well, it's done and cannot be undone. Fortunately such power

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

conferred carries its own safety factor. The worst it can do is destroy its own world and seal it off safely from others. You made the investure correctly?"

"Yes. I left the Red Cap, the symbol of authority and power. There was instant acceptance and comprehension."

"Now we'll do the big towns," screamed Carnadine Thompson in the Clubhouse of the Bengal Tigers.

"Peas and Beans —

"New Orleans!"

She jabbed the needle into New Orleans on the map, and the great shaft a hundred thousand miles long came down into the middle of the crescent city.

"Candy store,

"Baltimore," howled Carnadine and jabbed in another needle. And that old city was destroyed. But there never was a place that screamed so loudly over its own destruction or hated so much to go.

"Fatty's full of bolonio,

"San Antonio."

And Carnadine stuck it in with full assurance of her powers, red cap atilt, eyes full of green fire. There were some of us who liked that place and wished that it could have been spared.

"Eustace is a sisty —

"Corpus Christi."

"I know one," said Eustace:

"Eggs and Batter —

"Cincinnater."

He rhymed and jabbed, manfully but badly.

"That didn't rhyme very good," said Carnadine. "I bet you botched it."

He did. It wasn't a clean-cut holocaust at all. It was a clumsy bloody grinding job—not what you'd like.

"Eustace, go in the house and get the big world map," ordered Carnadine, "and some more needles. We don't want to run out of things."

"Peewee is a sapolis,

"Minneapolis."

"Let me do one," pleaded Peewee.

"Hopping Froggo,

"Chicago."

"I do wish that you people would let me handle this," said Carnadine. "That was awful."

It was. It was horrible. That giant needle didn't go in clean at all. It buckled great chunks of land and tore a ragged gap. Nothing pretty, nothing round about it. It was plain brutal destruction.

If you don't personally go for this stuff, then pick a high place near a town that nobody can find a rhyme for, and go there fast. But if you can't get out of town in the next two minutes, then forget it. It will be too late.

Carnadine plunged ahead:

"What the hecktady —

"Schenectady."

That was one of the roundest and cleanest holes of all.

"Flour and crisco —

"San Francisco."

That was a good one. It got all the people at once, and then set up tidal waves and earthquakes all over everywhere.

"Knife and Fork —" END

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LITTLE DOG GONE

BY ROBERT F. YOUNG

ILLUSTRATED BY MORROW

It wasn't a dog, quite. But it had a dog's faith and a dog's love for man—even unto death!

The ground beneath his back was frost-cold. During the night the coldness had climbed into his arms and shoulders and condensed in his chest, and now he was a part of the ground itself, an almost indistinguishable part that must soon break free or forever be lost.

Through will alone, he drove the last of the garish nightmares away, turned on his side and opened his eyes.

It had been a binge to beat all binges. It had begun in a little bar off Teletheatre Square in Old New York City and it had blasted off into space and taken root among the stars. Now, after strutting and fretting its hour upon the stage, it had come to an end.

Dawn had emerged from her gray dwelling in the east and was lighting pink candles to illumine the big back yard of the world. It was a world that Nicholas Hayes could not remember. He knew, though, that he had seen it before, seen it from the distorted deeps of drunkenness . . . through the mists of no-pain and non-remembrance . . . from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the false heights of Never Come Tomorrow . . . seen it, and forgotten it.

He was lying in a field. Rows of dead stalks alternated with parallel swaths of frost-wilted weeds. On either side were similar fields, and in the distance, woods. Beyond the woods, hills showed.

He could see his breath. He could see something else, too — a small animal of some kind. It was crouching in the weeds a dozen yards away, and it was watching him.

He wondered whether it was inside or outside his head.

Painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow, picked up a loose clod of earth and heaved it in the animal's direction.

The animal promptly disappeared.

He patted his pockets in the vain hope of finding a bottle. Raising his eyes, he saw the animal again. It had reappeared in the same spot, and had resumed watching him. "Go way!" he shouted hoarsely, and closed his eyes. When he re-opened them, the animal was still there.

It looked as though it might be a dog of some sort, but he could not be sure. Perhaps it was real after all. Working himself into a sitting position, Hayes went through his pockets. They contained his billfold, which was empty, his Teletheatre Guild membership card, which was void, his passport, a large handful of change and a concentrated chocolate bar. Unwrapping the bar, he broke it in two and tossed one half to the animal. Again the animal vanished; but this time, thanks to the growing light, he saw it reappear some fifty yards beyond its original position. As he sat there, staring, it vanished once more, rematerialized in the very same spot it had occupied before, and gobbled down the chocolate.

Hayes rubbed his eyes. Still the animal would not go away. Moreover, it was looking at him as though it momentarily expected him to toss it another piece of chocolate. He held out the remaining half of the bar. "If you want it, you'll have to come and get it," he said.

The dog — for a dog of some kind it seemed to be — flattened out on its belly and inched its way forward. Dawn had lighted the last of her pink candles, and now her son, the day was coming out to play. In the brighter light Hayes saw that the dog was about the size of a miniature poodle. Its hair was quite thick, though not in the least curly, and was the color of the rising morning mist. Its slightly oversize paws suggested that it had not completely grown out of puppyhood, and the sad, eager-to-be-loved look in its slightly slanted golden eyes more or less substantiated the suggestion. The rather long but blunt muzzle lent a comical pug-nose effect, and the tatterdemalion ears hung down on either side of the head like a pair of frayed bar-rags. By far the most remarkable feature about the animal was its tail — on the bushy side, terminating in a white tuft. But instead of wagging, it rotated, first clockwise and then counterclockwise, somewhat in the manner of a spring winding itself up and letting itself run down. A star-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shaped white mark blazed in the middle of the animal's forehead.

Obviously the dog had not been eating very well of late, or perhaps, like any puppy, it was eternally hungry. It made short work of the second piece of chocolate, and gazed eagerly up into Hayes' eyes as though expecting a third. Tentatively, Hayes tweaked one of the rag-like ears. "Well, anyway, at least you're real," he said.

But if the dog *was* real, why had it disappeared?

Hayes let the question ride for the moment. Too many other questions had priority over it. For one example, where was he? For another, what was he doing here?

He could remember choosing a planet at random and booking passage for it at the Great Eastern Spaceport, and he could vaguely remember boarding a subspace liner and long hours spent in the starbar, talking with other passengers now and then, but mostly to himself. But that was all he could remember. Sometime during the voyage he had reached the point of no-pain and non-remembrance. Somewhere along the line he had scaled the heights of Never Come Tomorrow and thumbed his nose at the cosmos.

And now, tomorrow had come. And the heights were hopelessly behind him.

He forced himself to his feet. His head was one vast gnawing ache, his body, a lump of clay supported by unfeeling stilts that once had been a pair of legs. Hatless, coatless, begrimed of slacks and shirt, he turned and faced the way he must have come. There was a road of sorts not too far distant, and presently he was walking along it toward a misted huddle of buildings that spelled a town.

A soft whimpering sound came from behind him. He stopped and turned. The little dog stopped, too. It fixed him with a forlorn eye. "Well, what do you know?" Hayes said. And then, "Come on, Bar-rag. If you'll promise not to disappear on me again, I'll stake you to a meal."

"Rowp!" the little dog answered, and rotated its tail. Hayes waited till it caught up to him, then turned and continued on his way.

II

He was sweating when he came to the first house, and yet he was shivering, too. By the time he reached the business section, his chest was paining him so acutely that he could barely breathe.

The business section was still asleep, but it informed him by means of its unpretentious facades and crude wooden walkways that the town was an out-planet settlement. However, there were thousands of out-plant settlements. This could be any one of them. The place-name, when he finally spotted it on the facade of the only hotel, told him nothing:

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

He headed for the hotel, Bar-rag trotting at his heels. The doors were open, but there was no one

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on the immediate premises. He looked around. If he had ever been there before, the memory eluded him. He stepped into the bar. That at least ought to be familiar, and familiar it turned out to be. However, the bell that the big raftered room with its old-fashioned tables and chairs rang in his mind was faint indeed. While he knew that he had been there recently, he could not remember any detail of his visit.

He chose a table at random and sat down. Bar-rag, obviously disconcerted by its new surroundings, slipped beneath the table and curled up at his feet. The room was as devoid of decor as it was of people. Two high windows looked out into the street, a liana-like rope looped incongruously down from a centrally-located rafter to a small gallery on the wall opposite the bar, and there was a doorway in the rear that presumably led to the kichen.

Hayes pounded on the tabletop. Someone ought to be up at least.

Somone was: a tall girl with shoulder-length blonde hair, rather wide hips, and nice legs. She advanced purposefully into the room through the doorway at the rear, her blue eyes bright with indignation. "Breakfast isn't served till eight-thirty!" she snapped. "Just who in hell do you think you are, mister?" Abruptly she stopped in her tracks. Then, slowly, she covered the remaining distance to the table, eyes no longer indignant. "I'm sorry, Mr. Hayes." she said. "I didn't recognize you."

She had a full, oval face, but her rather high cheekbones and the way she wore her hair made her cheeks seem thin. Hayes judged her to be somewhere in her late twenties or early thirties, which put her pretty much in his own age-category. However, he did not know her from Eve. "When did we meet?" he asked.

"We didn't, but I know you from your teletheatre roles. Last night when you came into the bar I recognized you right away." Briefly, she lowered her eyes. She was wearing a knee-length floral dress that covered most of her shoulders, and her hair lay upon the false flowers like morning sunshine. "You — you might say I'm one of your many admirers."

"Did anyone else recognize me?"

"I don't think so. I'm afraid even taped teletheatre hasn't got to Black Dirt yet."

Black Dirt, he thought. That would be Procyon 16. Now why in hell had he come here? Aloud, he said, "I'm a little foggy on a few points. By any chance did I happen to mention how I got here?"

"I heard you tell the bartender that you'd come in from Port-o'-Stars by airbus, and that you were recently arrived from Earth. Don't you remember, Mr. Hayes?"

"How long did I hang around?"

"Till nearly closing time. I — I wanted to talk to you, but I didn't have enough nerve. Then suddenly I looked around and you were gone. I checked your bag and your coat in the lobby. I thought perhaps you'd gone somewhere else to sleep."

Hayes grimaced. "I did. Though I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

imagine my original intention was confined to a walk beneath the stars."

At this point, Bar-rag poked its head from beneath the table. The girl jumped. "Where in the world did you get hold of a doggone, Mr. Hayes?" she said. "I thought all of them had been frightened back into the hills."

"A doggone?"

"That's the settlers' name for them. First you see them, then you don't. They're capable of teleportation."

"Well, no wonder!" Hayes said. "For a while there when I first woke up I thought I was seeing things. He followed me back to town for some reason or other — probably a free meal. Do you think you could fix him up with something?"

"Of course. He must like you, Mr. Hayes. Uusually when a doggone sees a human being he teleports himself as far away as he can get. Or perhaps I should say 'it'. They're bisexual, you know, and reproduce by parthenogenesis." She looked at Hayes closely. "You're shivering, Mr. Hayes. Shall I turn the heat up?"

"No. Just bring me a triple shot."

He downed half of it a second after she set it before him. A shudder began deep within him and spread upward. The room very nearly turned upside down, but he steadied it just in time by gripping the edge of the table with both hands. Presently he became aware that the girl was leaning over him. "Are you all right, Mr. Hayes?" she asked.

He drank the rest of the whiskey. "I will be. By the way, what's your name?"

"Moira. Moira Blair."

"Bring me another triple shot, Moira."

There was concern in her blue eyes. "Do you think —"

"I do. Bring it."

After she brought it, she went into the kitchen and returned a few minutes later bearing a plate of meat scraps. She set the plate on the floor, and the little doggone came out of hiding and dug in. "Does he have a name yet, Mr. Hayes?"

"Bar-rag." Hayes tossed off the second triple shot and removed the handful of change from his pocket. He piled it carefully on the table. "This cairn of coins you see before you, Moira" represents the last of the tangible assets of one Nicholas Hayes," he said. "You will keep bringing him drinks till it is gone, after which it is to be hoped that you will have the good sense to throw him out into the gutter where he belongs."

"Please let me help you, Mr. Hayes."

"Why?"

"Because it isn't fair for you to — to be like this. When I was still living in New North Dakota, Mars and had access to live TTV, I saw you in all your teletheatre roles, both Debuts and Encores. I saw you as Tambourlaine. I saw you as Cyrano. I saw you as Hamlet. I saw you as Edward II. I saw you as Willy Loman. And you were wonderful. You still are! You always will be."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Aha! but you didn't see me as Milton Pomfret, did you? You didn't see me in the Debut of *The Two-Sided Triangle*. Even if you were still living in New North Dakota you wouldn't have seen me." Hayes crashed his fist on the table. "And do you know why you wouldn't have seen me, Moira? You wouldn't have seen me because on Debut night I showed up as drunk as a spaceman on three-weeks' leave and got myself thrown out of teletheatre. And it was just what I had coming, too. Because you see, Moira my dear, that was far from the first time I had shown up as drunk as a spaceman on three-weeks' leave — far from the first time Humpty Dumpty Hayes had had a great fall. Only this time, Christopher King's horses and Christopher King's men didn't bother to put Humpty Dumpty back together again with alco-antidotes and souped-up sugar pills. By this time they were as sick of him as he was of himself. So they told him that if he wanted to be put back together again he would have to do the job himself. So he burned his bridges behind him, invested in a super-binge, climbed aboard and blasted off for the stars on a mission he has since forgotten and no longer wants to remember. For God's sake, bring him a bottle and let him bow out in peace!"

"No."

It was the flattest, most uncompromising "no" that Hayes had ever heard in all his life. It brought him to his feet — and to his undoing. This time, when the room started to turn upside down, he could not stop it. Giddiness washed over him like gray surf, and beyond the surf, blackness roiled . . . And now, the blackness began swirling around his legs. Up, up, it swirled, and he called out "Leslie!" in a semi-strangled voice. However, it was not sophisticated dark-haired Leslie who leaped through the gathering night to his side, but a tall blonde girl with anxious eyes. He felt strong arms supporting him as he sank into nothingness, and just before the nothingness became complete, he felt her fingers touch his face.

There were jumbled phrases of warmth and cold, of darkness and light. Sometimes the bedroom in which he lay played host to a blond girl wearing a print dress — and once in a while to the same girl wearing a jaguar-skin sarong — and frequently to a coarse, bearded man with chest-prodding fingers — and always, it seemed, to a small, mist-gray animal with bar-rag ears, rotating tail, and worshipful golden eyes. Finally there were late mornings and long, sunny afternoons, and sometimes snow falling lazily beyond diamond-patterned window-panes.

The bedroom was not a large one. Strictly speaking, it was not a bedroom at all, but a commandeered living room. There was a sofa and there were chairs and there was a small table on which stood a lamp, a clock and a copy of R. E. Hames' *Stellar Geography*. The only incongruous item was the bed. It was high and narrow and it had obviously been borrowed from the local

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

frontier hospital. It stood out among the endemic furniture like a besheeted barge floating down a nonexistent river.

One night, the girl in the jaguar skin came out of the shadows and gazed down upon his face. "Dr. Grimes says you're much better," she said. "I'm glad."

"You're Moira, aren't you?" Hayes said.

"Not when I wear my costume. When I wear my costume I'm Zonda of the Amazon, the Amazon in this case being the big river of the same name in the wilds of Alpha Centauri 9. Haven't you ever heard of Zonda of the Amazon, Mr. Hayes?"

"I can't say as I have."

"She was the main character of an earthside 3V show of the same title. They chose me for the role because they needed a big blonde and didn't in the least mind if she fell considerably short of being a second Sarah Bernhardt. I used to swing through trees on fake grapevines and win friends and influence animals and utter sparkling lines such as 'Zonda hungry' and 'Zonda save you — you no fear.' For a poor girl from New North Dakota, Mars who couldn't act her way out of a plastic bag, I did all right for myself for a while. And then the series was canceled and I found myself out in the cold, because big blondes who can't act are no more in demand in Videoville than they used to be in Hollywood. But I'd saved enough money to last me until the reruns began and checks started coming through again. And after the reruns came the repeat - reruns. And after that the series was sold successively to just about every earthside station on the network, and I began making personal appearances in local studios for the benefit of the kids who still remembered me. Then the series was sold successively to the Martian stations and I made more personal appearances, and eventually the tapes were shipped off to outplanets like Black Dirt that didn't have 3V yet but that did have local theatres where the tapes could be run along with old, old movies, and, well, I tagged along as usual for more personal appearances and finally I ended up here in The Last Of The Mohicans where the proprietor of the local hotel offered me a job for life if I'd play Zonda of the Amazon once a week for the benefit of his bar trade. By that time I was sick of being Zonda. But I was even sicker of traveling from one sad stand to another, so I took him up on his offer."

"What do you have to do?" Hayes asked.

"Three times each Saturday night I swing across the barroom on a make-believe grapevine, land on the bar, give the victory cry of a Centaurian jungle girl, and fight off the dirt farmers."

"Is this your living room?"

She nodded. "But don't feel that you're inconveniencing me, Mr. Hayes. I never use it."

"Why didn't you pack me off to the nearest charity ward and have done with me?"

"I thought you'd be better off

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

here. Out-planet hospitals are understaffed and half of the time they don't even have the medical supplies they need." She glanced at the clock on the table. "I'll have to be going now. Mr. Hayes. It's almost time for Zonda's first aerial maneuver. Bar-rag will keep you company till you fall asleep. Won't you, Bar-rag?"

At the sound of its name, the little doggone materialized on the bed, joyously winding and unwinding its tail. "Rowp!" it said to Hayes, and licked his cheek. Hayes grinned. "I need a shave, don't I?" he said.

"I'll have a barber come in tomorrow. While he's at it, he can give you a haircut, too." Moira dimmed the light. "Good night, Mr. Hayes."

"Good night," Hayes said.

After she had gone, he let his head sink deep into the pillow. He was weary and he was weak, and he felt as though he could go on lying there forever. There was no sound save for the remote thumping of a stereo in the bar below, and the soft susurrus of Bar-rag's breathing. Beyond the diamond-patterned windowpanes, a streetlight caught glistening particles of gently falling snow . . . In Old York, it would be summer. It was always summer in Old York, with balmy winds blowing in from the rerouted Gulf Stream and breathing up the revamped avenues. The open-air little theatres around Teletheatre Square would be in full swing. NOW PLAYING: *The Two-Sided Triangle*, with Leslie Lake and Humpty Dumpty Hayes. No, not Humpty Dumpty Hayes. Humpty Dumpty Hayes had had a great fall — remember? And all the King's horses and all the King's men hadn't bothered to put Humpty Dumpty back together again.

Hayes closed his eyes against the sudden bleakness of the ceiling. Desperately, he reached out and touched Bar-rag's glossy back. The little animal curled up in the crook of his arm. It was all right then, and he knew that tonight at least he could sleep. NOW PLAYING, he thought drowsily: *The Last of the Mohicans Hotel*, with Bar-rag, Zonda of the Amazon, and Humpty Dumpty Hayes . . .

II

There were times after that when he wanted a drink, when he begged for a drink, when he cried out for a drink and raved when Moira would not bring him one and locked the door behind her. Once when she came upstairs after her Zonda routine he was waiting for her in the shadows, and when she came into the room he seized her throat and went tumbling with her to the floor, threatening to kill her unless she promised to go back down to the bar and get him a bottle.

He was still pitifully weak. It would have been no trick at all for her to have broken his grip and flung him aside but she didn't. Instead, she lay there immobile, and after a while, she said, "Go ahead, Nick — choke me. What are you waiting for?" His hands fell away

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

then, and he sat there sick and ashamed on the floor till she got up and helped him back into bed.

When she brought him his breeakfast the next morning she sat down beside the bed and talked to him as though nothing had happened. He couldn't stand it. "For God's sake, why don't you throw me out and have done with me!" he said.

Her eyes were soft upon his face. "Nights are the worst, aren't they?" she said.

"Nights I'm someone else. Or maybe it's the other way around. It doesn't matter — neither one of us is any good."

"I think you're someone in between. Like me. I'm someone in between Zonda of the Amazon and Moira Blair."

"It's not the same, and you know it," Hayes said. Then, "How long have I been cooped up in here?" he asked.

"Three weeks. But the doctor says you'll be on your feet in a few more days. I guess you know by now that you very nearly died."

Suddenly Bar-rag materialized between them on the edge of the bed. There were particles of ice clinging to its paws, and a little ridge of snow lay along the top of its nose. Hayes gave the little animal a piece of toast. "I wonder where he's been," he said.

"Home in the hills, I imagine," Moira said. "They have an infallible sense of direction, and I've heard that they can teleport themselves millions of miles. I think they could even teleport themselves from one planet to another if they took it into their heads."

"If they did, they'd be dead. Teleportation may be instantaneous in one sense, but it's still subject to the velocity of light — unless it employs subspace."

"It doesn't — which is probably why doggones never leave Black Dirt. They probably sense what would happen to them if they were to spend several minutes in an absolute-zero vacuum. The way an ordinary dog knows enough not to jump over a cliff."

"Rowp!" Bar-rag said.

Hayes laughed. "I almost believe he knows what we're talking about."

"It wouldn't surprise me. They're remarkably intelligent." She stood up. "I must go now, Nick."

"Between Moira of the Kitchen and Zonda of the Amazon, you put in a pretty long week."

"I don't mind. It's good to keep busy." She picked up the breakfast tray. Just as she did so, Bar-rag disappeared from the bed, and a split second later, scratching sounds came from the hall. She went over to the hall door and opened it, and there was Bar-rag standing proudly on the threshold. "Why I do believe you're showing off," she said. "Bar-rag, you're a born ham!"

"Rowp!" Bar-rag said, and teleported itself back to the bed.

Hayes stared at the roguish face. "Moira," he said excitedly, "I just remembered why I came to the stars! I was going to tour the outplanet towns and support myself by giving Shakespearean soliloquies. It was a corny idea and I thought of it when I was drunk, and it never would have paid off in a million years. But now I've got a better

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

idea. Would you bring me a pad and pencil before you go back downstairs?"

"Sure, Nick."

He did not begin to write right away, but sat there thinking, his pillow propped behind his back, the pad resting on his knees. To accomplish what he had in mind, he would need first of all the right sort of skit.

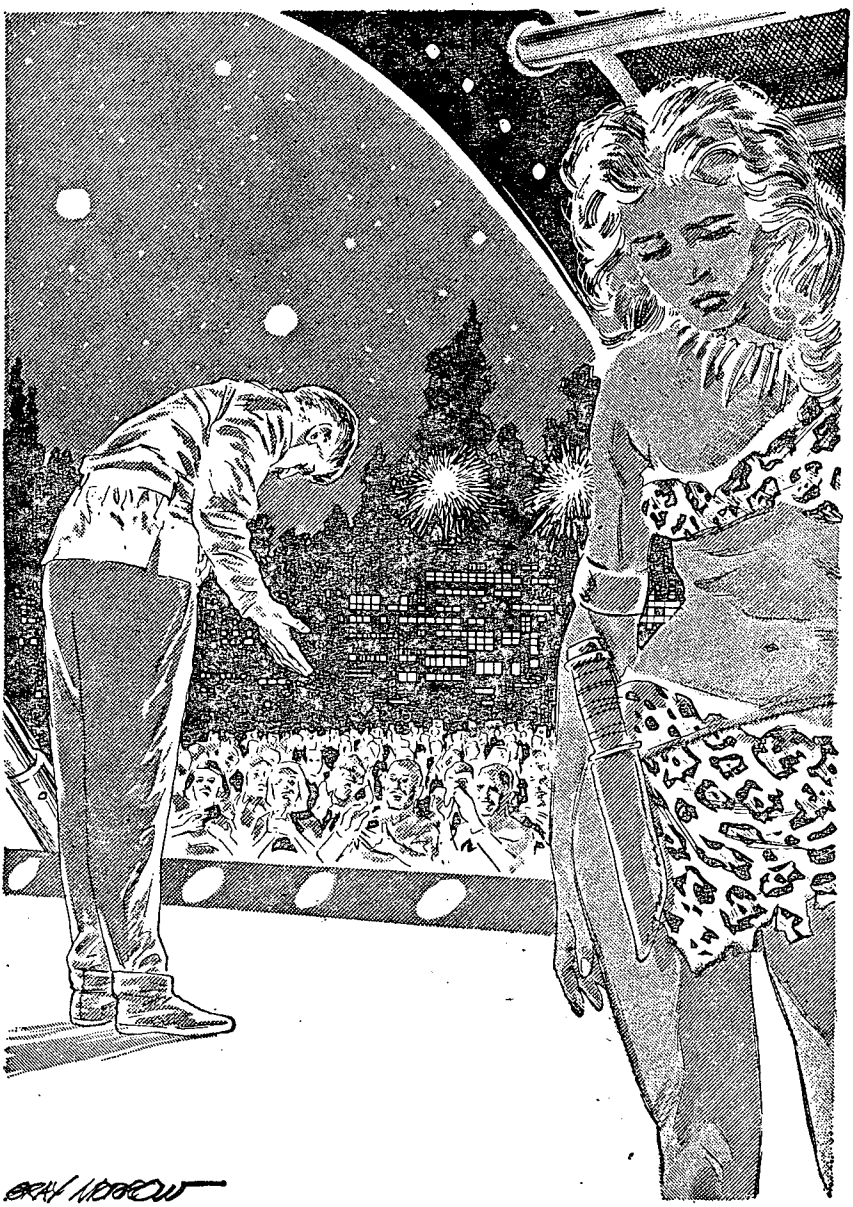
Perhaps he could adapt it from a passage of a well-known play that was in the public domain. The idea appealed to him, and he began going over the plays he knew by heart. The process could very well have taken the rest of the morning if *The Two-Sided Triangle* hadn't come immediately to mind. When that happened, he knew he needed to go no further: the play was a good sixty years old, it was perennially popular and part of it at least should prove ideally suited to his needs.

He knew it by heart. Now he began thinking it through, word for word, line by line, scene by scene. It concerned a young executive named Milton Pomfret whose wife Glenda was determined to find out whether he was a philanderer or a perfect husband. Enlisting the services of a phoneticist and a face-and-figure specialist, she made arrangements with each to have herself temporarily changed into another woman, after which she told her husband she was going to visit her mother for a few weeks, packed her things and rented a downtown apartment under the name of Mary Lou Johnson. She had her face and figure altered over the weekend, and with the phoneticist's help, practiced and perfected a subtly different mode of speech. Then, on Monday morning, she got a secretarial job in her husband's office and went on the make for him. On several occasions she almost became his "mistress", but each time, something happened to interrupt the proceedings, leaving her no wiser than she had been before.

Eventually the husband fell madly in love with her and asked her to marry him — a development she had failed to foresee — and in order to keep him she had to divorce him as her original and remarry him as her second self.

The scene which Hayes finally settled on was one of the most popular ones in the play. It opened with Milton Pomfret stopping off at Mary Lou's apartment after a date and sitting down beside her on the big sofa in her living room. By this time, Milton's defenses had crumbled and he was ready to make love and as for Mary Lou she was more than ready. However, each time they were about to go into a clinch an interruption occurred. In the play, the interruptions were ironic in nature; in the version which Hayes presently set down, they were farcical and amounted in each case to the materializing of Bar-rag between the two lovers each time they were about to embrace. The first time the little animal appeared, Mary Lou put it outside and locked the door; the second time, she put it outside and locked the windows as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

well as the door; the third time she put it outside, locked the windows and the door and activated the anti-housebreak field; and the fourth time. with Milton's help, she got a suitcase and a trunk out of the closet. put the little animal into the suitcase, locked the suitcase and secured the straps, put the suitcase into the trunk, closedand locked the lid. dragged the trunk outside. came back in, locked and barricaded the door and reactivated the anti-housebreak field. Then, certain that they would not be interrupted again, the two frustrated lovers returned to the sofa, only to have Bar-rag pop into being between them for the fifth and final time. In addition to these changes, Hayes made the revisions that were necessary to make the skit an independent unit, but otherwise he kept the dialogue and the action intact.

He was just completing the polished version when Moira brought him his lunch. He was so enthusiastic that he could hardly eat.

"Read it," he said, handing her the script. "Picture yourself as Mary Lou, me as Milton Pomfret and Bar-rag as himself. See what you think."

Her blue eyes brought a summer sunrise to mind when she raised them from the final page. "You — you want *me* to act this with *you*?"

"You and Bar-rag. He'll be the star of course. The people on Black Dirt know about doggones but the people on the other out-planets have probably never even heard of such an animal, and with them. the act will be twice as effective. We'll be combining old-fashioned thaumaturgy with broad out-planet humor and, even if we fail to get laughs our audiences will at least be mystified. Sure I know that such a corn-ball setup would fall flat on its face in Old York but we should worry about Old York with all the out-planet places we've got at our disposal. I'll turn out a few more skits to round out the show to about an hour and a half, then we'll go on tour, the three of us, and—"

"You — you want *me* to act with *you*?"

Come off it, Moira. I'm not bestowing any honors. I'm merely suggesting a way for us to make some money. *I've* got to make some someway, and acting, or at least some aspect of it, is the only means I have. If you're satisfied with your job here, I'll get someone else. But I'd much rather have you."

"Don't you *dare* get anybody else!"

He grinned. "All right, I won't," he said. "We can begin rehearsing right here in this room," he went on. "If you can scare up a trunk somewhere, we'll have all the props we'll need; and the room itself will serve as a stage. Our main problem is going to be Bar-rag. He's got to appear between us at exactly the right times or the whole thing won't work. You'll notice that in the skit the last word Milton speaks before each interruption is 'darling'. That'll be Bar-rag's cue. Do you think we can get him to respond to it?"

Her eyes were shining, and there was a hint of tears in their corners. Hayes didn't believe he had ever

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seen anyone so happy in all his life. "I'm sure we can," she said. "Bar-rag, come here."

The doggone materialized in her arms, tail whirring like a small propellor. A tear tumbled down her cheek and dropped on the little animal's nose. NOW PLAYING, Hayes thought: Zonda of the Amazon, Bar-rag the Wonder Dog, and Nicholas Hayes in *Courtin' Mary Lou.*

IV

They began rehearsing the next evening, with Hayes playing Milton Pomfret and directing at the same time.

Moira and Bar-rag proved to be the two most co-operative players he had ever worked with. Within three days the skit was running smoothly, with the doggone appearing promptly on cue and Moira embracing the role of the beautiful but far from brilliant out-planet girl as though she had been preparing for it all her life. As for Hayes himself, he merely had to make a few minor changes in his portrayal of the old Milton Pomfret in order to become the new, after which he performed the part with his usual adroit mastery.

Between rehearsals, he dashed off three more skits, each embodying the sort of broad humor out-planet people went for, and he and Moira mastered these skits, too, with Bar-rag providing an enthusiastic if puzzled audience of one. Finally one evening they ran through the entire act, saving *Courtin' Mary Lou* till the last. The performance came off without a hitch. "Now," said Hayes, "we've got to have a sort of trial run right here in The Last of the Mohicans, just to make sure. For that we'll have to rent the local theatre, and to rent the local theatre we're going to need money." He went into the bedroom, opened the dresser drawer where Moira had put away his things, and returned a moment later with a platinum figurine of Maurice Evans. Inscribed on the base were the words: *The Evans Teletheatre Award, given to Nicholas Hayes in this year of Our Lord* 2186 *for his outstanding contribution to the telestage in his role as Edward II.* He handed the figurine to Moira. "Take it into Port-o'-Stars tomorrow. You ought to be able to get a couple of hundred credits for it, which should be enough to get us started."

She stood there looking down at the figurine as though it were a crucifix. "I have money, Nick. There's no need for you to make such a sacrifice."

He flushed. "That's a chunk of platinum you're holding in your hands. Nothing more. You'll do as I say."

"But it's not fair, Nick."

"All right, I'll go myself!"

He reached for the figurine, but she drew it back. "I'll go," she said, not looking at him. "You're not well enough yet."

"Good. While you're gone, I'll get some advertising copy into circulation and rig up an anti-housebreak field generator. When you get back, we'll run through the act on a real stage. And in a couple of days we'll open!"

On the first night, they played be-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fore a full house. On the second. And the third.

Hayes was amazed till he remembered that out-planet towns like The Last of The Mohicans were virtually devoid of live entertainment, and that the same state of affairs endured in the surrounding areas. Even with Bar-rag as a known quantity, the *Courtin' Mary Lou* skit went over big, and the three skits that preceded it got their share of laughs, too. No, not laughs: guffaws—guffaws that made the skylights rattle. It was a new experience for Hayes, who was accustomed to sophisticated audiences, but he took it in his stride without undue difficulty. Moira took it in hers, too, and as for Bar-rag, it turned out to be the truest trouper of them all, and fell sound asleep in Hayes' arms while they were returning to the hotel after their first performance.

They could have played in The Last Of The Mohicans for a month running, but Hayes was anxious to get started on the itinerary which he had mapped out with the aid of Hames' *Stellar Geography*, and anxious also to sample an audience that had never seen a doggone. Hence he instructed Moira to give her employer a week's notice.

When the week was up they packed their things, set out by airbus to Port-o'-Stars, cleared Bar-rag through customs and booked passage for Goshen, the twelfth planet of the blue star Sirius. Moira had sold the figurine for three hundred credits. Their take after expenses from the The Last Of The Mohicans stand amounted to more than seven hundred more, giving them a combined working capital of some one thousand credits.

Things were looking up.

Their first stop on Goshen was a backwoods town called Down In The Valley.

The town itself harbored a mere handful of colonists, most of them merchants, but the first district that it serviced was as large as the Holland Land Grant and boasted a population of some ten thousand immigrants and some two thousand natives. During the three weeks Hayes & Co. played at the Down In The Valley Grange Hall, all of them, immigrant and native alike, managed to get into town at least once to see the "disappearin' dawg".

Hayes should have been delighted. He wondered why he wasn't.

From Down In The Valley, the trio journeyed overland to Sheepdip, and from Sheepdip to Rise-n'-Shine, and from Rise-n'-Shine to St. Johnswort. In his room at the St. Johnswort Hotel Hayes came across a discarded copy of *Spectrum*, and in it he found a review of *The Two-Sided Triangle*. The play had enjoyed a successful TTV Debut and was enjoying equal success during its Old York stand. According to the reviewer, it was a cinch for a TTV Encore. Leslie Lake's bravura in the portrayal of Glenda—Mary Lou had firmly established her in the upper echelons of stardom, and the part of Milton Pomfret was being played with a finesse seldom encountered in an understudy. Hayes threw the magazine in the wastebasket.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He walked over to the room's only window and looked down into the street. The hour was late, and no one was abroad. In the adjoining room Moira, weary from their long journey, was preparing for bed. He could hear drawers opening and closing as she put her things away, and the muted patter of her bare feet upon the floor. Behind him, Bar-rag lay fast asleep at the foot of the bed.

He felt suddenly, horribly, alone.

Leaving the room, he descended to the lobby. The lobby was empty. He stepped out into the street. There was a lingering tang of winter in the night air, but there was the scent of green things, too. In St. Johnswort, it was spring. Soon the lovely flowers that had given the little town its name would be nodding their yellow heads along roadsides and country lanes. Soon birds would sing.

He began to walk. St. Johnswort stood on a gentle mountainside, and below it lay a deep valley where the scattered lights of farmhouses shone. Above the valley lay the inverted valley of the sky, and here there were other lights, the lights of stars.

One of the stars was Sol.

In Old York, it would be summer. It was always summer in Old York. In Old York, there were many lights and much laughter, and never any need to be alone. In Old York, if you were good enough, you could step upon a magic stage and cameras would focus on you and multiply you by one hundred million . . . and on Earth and on Mars you would step into millions of living rooms, and people would know you were alive. Out, out, brief candle! Out, out, the brief career of Nicholas Hayes.

The street along which he was walking came to an end. It did not debouch into another street the way most streets do when they die. It simply stopped existing because there was no further reason for it to be. Trees grew boldly up to its very edge, and in the darkness a phosphorescent sign said, *Dead End.*

Wearily, Hayes turned and began retracing his steps. He became aware then that he was not alone. Something was walking beside him — a little animal with a pug nose and golden eyes.

"Bar-rag," he said, "what're you doing out so late at night? You should be in bed."

"Rowp!" the little animal said, and looked up at him the way people used to look up at him at curtain call when he and his supporting cast stepped out upon the proscenium, and took their bows. Then it disappeared. Lord! he thought, if I could teleport I'd be back on Earth as fast as the wings of light could carry me. And then he thought, Yes, and arrive there dead eight years from now. I'm as well off being dead, dumbly waltzing around up here among the stars.

Yes, but did he have to remain dead? Was he so stupid that he could devise no way to bring himself back to life? No, he was not stupid. Not he, Nicholas Hayes. It wasn't a matter of devising a means to gain his end. It was merely a matter of selection!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When he got back to his room, Bar-rag was fast asleep again at the foot of the bed. The adjoining room was silent. Should he wait till morning? he wondered. He decided not to. Tapping on the door, he said, "Moira, may I talk with you for a while."

There was a silence, and then the clicking of a lamp. "Yes, Nick, come in."

In the radiance of the bed lamp her hair was the color of evening primroses and lay like spring upon the pillow. Her eyes were bellflower-blue. "Are you all right, Nick?" she asked.

"Yes." He pulled a chair over to the side of the bed, and sat down. "I was walking tonight, and I got an idea. An idea for a theatre-ship."

"Yes, Nick?"

"Centuries ago on Earth, charlatans used to travel from frontier town to frontier town on enclosed wagons, giving what were called medicine shows. The shows themselves were free, designed to attract a crowd so that the charlatan could peddle his quack remedies. Thanks to too-rapid colonization brought on by the subspace drive, we have today a situation similar to that which existed in the old west. The settlers have spread out so rapidly and so widely that it's no longer possible to keep them supplied with everything they need, and this is particularly true with regard to medicine. So suppose, Moira, that you and I were to invest in a used space-freighter, remodel the interior so that we could live in it comfortably, stock it with all-purpose medicine kits, and install a stage. Then suppose that we were to limit our act to the *Courtin' Mary Lou* skit and were to peddle medicine kits instead of charging admission. We could sell them at a modest profit, and we'd never have to feel guilty about taking advantage of gullible people. Because far from taking advantage of them, we'd be helping them. Granted, we'd never get rich. But we'd make a reasonably good living, and, while we'd be traveling all the time, we'd never really be away from home because we'd have our home with us. What do you think, Moira?"

For a long while she was silent. Then, "Why do you want to do this, Nick?"

The time had come for the lie. He told it beautifully: "Because I've got to stop thinking of myself as an actor. Because somehow I've got to shed the past. I need a new identity, a totally different identity. Maybe being a 'medicine man' will bring me peace."

She looked away from his face; at the coverlet, at her hands. They were rather large hands, and hard work had broadened them; but they were full of grace. Presently she said, "I think it's a wonderful idea, Nick."

"Good. We'll do a one-week stand here, then we'll go to Mars. There's a big used-ship yard at Port-o'-Sands that ought to be able to supply us with the sort of ship we'll need." He stood up. "I'm sorry I had to wake you up, Moira, but I had to find out how you'd feel."

"It's all right, Nick. And Nick?"

"Yes?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Port-o'-Sands isn't very far from New North Dakota. Maybe we can visit the farm. And — and my folks."

"We'll make it a point to. Good night, Moira."

"Good night."

V

The freighter they finally settled for was an old washtub of a job, but the ion drive was still in good working order and the space-subspace correlator, for all its passe design, functioned as efficiently as the newer, more compact units. In common with the more modern merchantmen, the *Dr. Albert Schweitzer,* as they named the vessel, could be operated by one man. Just as important, the deck of the lower level was but several feet above ground level, and in conjunction with the retractable dock would provide an excellent stage.

To obtain more width, Hayes had the original cargo-locks removed, the aperture enlarged and wider ones installed. The power room occupied most of the rear section of the lower hold, but there was still a dressing room for Moira, one for Hayes and space for three compartments and a small storage room. Moira insisted that Bar-rag's name be painted on the storage-room door, saying that in view of the fact that the litle doggone was the most essential member of the cast, it rated equal prestige at least. Grudgingly, Hayes gave in to her.

Half of the upper hold, Hayes set aside for the medicine kits, which had already been ordered from Earth, and for supplies. The other half he had converted into a large living room, a commodious kitchen and a small office. The pilots' quarters on the deck above made an excellent pair of upstairs bedrooms. As a finishing touch, he replaced the pilots' quarters and control room with a spiral steel stairway, after which he had the ship painted inside and out. Then he and Moira went shopping for furniture.

By this time, the capital of Hayes & Co. had dwindled to an alarming low. They had purchased the ship on time, putting the loan through the Port-o'-Sands Manufacturers' and Traders' Trust Company; for everything else, however, they had laid down hard cash.

Consequently, they had to settle for something less in the way of furniture than they originally had had in mind. In the end, though, this worked to their advantage, for Moira proved to have a knack for refurbishing chairs, tables, beds and even appliances, and eventually the cheapest and most decrepit items they bought yielded both dignity and grace. Nor did Moira stop with the furniture. The rooms themselves got a going over, too, and when she got done, the living quarters could have passed for a late-twentieth century duplex — which in effect was what they really were.

All this while she and Hayes had been attending night school and learning how to pilot a spacecraft. The near-complete automation of ships like the *Dr. Albert Schweitzer* had long since relegated spaceship

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

navigation to pretty much the same category as driving a late-twentieth century automobile. In many ways it was simpler; certainly it was less perilous. Nevertheless, there were certain basic steps that all would-be pilots had to be familiar with, and in addition there were scores of rules to be memorized. Then Moira and Hayes had to take the training ship on a solo orbit apiece, after which each of them had to go on a trial correlation run to Alpha Centauri 4 and back. Neither ran into any trouble, and they received their licenses on the same day.

Meanwhile, the medicine kits they had ordered from Earth had arrived and had been loaded onto the *Dr. Albert Schweitzer,* bringing their business in Port-o'-Sands to a close. "If we're going to visit your folks, it's high time we were getting started," Hayes said after supper one night. "What did you say the name of your home town was?"

She placed the last of the supper dishes in the rinser and turned the unit on. "Red Spud. It's not a town, though. It's a hamlet, and not much of a one at that. But it's on one of the main airbus routes."

"Good. We can pack tonight and leave in the morning."

She did not look at him. "All right."

"You don't seem very enthusiastic."

"Nick," she said to the stove, "do you think we could pretend to be — to be —"

"To be what?"

"Man and wife. For the duration of the visit, I mean. I — I know you've never thought of me that way, and I know I've no right to expect you to. But my mother and father are going to wonder. And probably they'll worry. So for their benefit could we make believe?"

Hayes looked out of the kitchen viewport into the cluttered darkness of the shipyard. Here and there, specks of wan light shone, and in the distance a night crew was dismantling an ancient SB-2. Marriage was an item that had not entered into his calculations. But would it do him any harm to marry Moira? True, he did not love her. But then he had never loved anyone, for that matter — save Leslie perhaps. And anyway, marriage wasn't the final step it used to be. There was a clause in every contract that made it possible for either party to walk out on the other during the first year without showing just cause — provided no children had been conceived during that period of time. *The Two-Sided Triangle* would come up for Encore long before a year.

So he said to Moira, "I remembered everything, didn't I? Except the most important thing of all. Will you marry me, Moira?"

Her eyes, when she raised them to his, brought Bar-rag's worshipful orbs to mind. "I didn't mean for you to ask me that."

"Nevertheless, I did ask it. So don't you think I rate an answer?"

"I'm the girl who used to swing on a grapevine in the Last Of The Mohicans Hotel — remember?"

"And I'm the drunk you rescued from the snakes."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He saw her then, as the years fell from her shoulders, the way she must have been when she set out from New North Dakota long ago, tall and slender, girlish and soft; Zonda of the Amazon standing in a treetop and looking out over the wide, wide world, blue eyes filled with wonder. But it was Moira, not Zonda, who answered. "I'm not Leslie," she said. "I could never be Leslie Lake."

He stood his ground. "I wouldn't want you to be." Stepping closer, he placed his hands upon her shoulders. "We'll find a justice of the peace tonight. We'll spend our honeymoon in New North Dakota." He paused. Terms of endearment had always been difficult for him to utter. He could never in real life give them the sincerity that was needed to put them across, the sincerity that came so natural to him on he stage. But it was imperative that he utter on now. "I'm sure we'll be happy, darling," he said.

Instantly, Bar-rag, who had been dozing on the couch in the living room, materialized between them. Moira laughed, and suddenly everything was the way it should be, and she was warm and wanted in his arms. Bar-rag, proud as a peacock for having remembered its cue, leaped ecstatically about their feet, tail rotating like a toy windmill.

New North Dakota was warmth on cold nights and red plains rolling away under pale Martian skies; it was raftered rooms and open fireplaces and strong coffee percolating on primitive stoves, it was *maklus* roasts browning in ovens, and brown gravy and baked beans; it was 3-V beamed all the way from Earth and viewed on long evenings in big living rooms; it was hikes in ocher hills and dances in bright community halls, and allemaine left and allemaine right; it was star-crisp nights walking home from warmth and laughter, camaraderie and good cheer; it was waking under eaves in gray dawnlight beneath feather ticks ten inches thick; it was a quaint little church standing like a steepled matchbox beneath a vastness of lavender sky, and the peace of pleasant people on pleasant Sunday afternoons.

When the time came to leave, Hayes was almost as sad as Moira's parents were. Moira cried. Bar-rag did not cry, of course; but the sadness in the little animal's slanted golden eyes said that it would have if it could.

However, the sadness was short-lived on both man and doggone's part. It lasted no longer than the airbus journey back to Port-o'Sands. After that, Hayes had piloting to occupy him, and Bar-rag, the exploration of the world of the ship.

The exploration had been begun before the trip to New North Dakota, and now it was resumed in earnest. Seemingly obsessed with a desire to be everywhere at once, the little animal kept teleporting itself from deck to deck, from hold to hold, from room to room, and for a while Hayes re-experienced the fear he had experienced during the Black Dirt-to-Goshen and Goshen-to-Mars run — that the doggone would mis-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

calculate its distance and teleport itself beyond the life-and-death boundary of the hull. But it never did. Hayes came to the conclusion that, in common with its sense of direction, a doggone's sense of distance was infallible.

The first planet on the medicine-show itinerary was Golden Grain, the ninth satellite of the green star Castor. After clearing the ship at Port-o'-Plains, he began the series of hops that he and Moira had decided upon, the first of which brought them to One Leg To Stand On. Coming down in an uncultivated field a few miles outside of town, he started beaming a carefully-prepared sales pitch over the local short-wave band: "NOW PLAYING: Nicholas Hayes, Zonda of the Amazon, and Bar-rag the Wonder Dog in *Courtin' Mary Lou.* Come one, come all — ADMISSION FREE. The place: the Theatre-Ship, two miles south of town. The time: starrise. See Bar-rag the Wonder Dog thwart the ardent lovers. See him appear out of Thin Air and spin his magic tail. See him; see him, see him! FREE! FREE! FREE!" If the "FREE" didn't get them, nothing would.

It got them all right — that, and the emptiness of their days. By the time the first star appeared, the section of the meadow in front of the ship was filled to capacity, and the beyond. The starlit faces were gaunt and unimaginative for the most part, but there was curiosity in every pair of eyes, and in the children's eagerness as well. Hayes turned on the footlights he had installed along the edge of the dock, and stepped from behind the maroon plastivelvet curtain Moira had made.

"Citizens of Golden Grain," he said, "we have not come here to defraud you of your hard-earned credits but to help and to entertain you. Whether or not you buy one of the medicine kits which I'm about to show you, you will be equally welcome to attend the show which will go on immediately afterward." He faced the curtain. "Zonda?"

Clad in her jaguar skin, her long legs flashing in the footlights, Moira stepped out on the dock carrying a small table on on which several dozen medicine kits were piled. Setting the table down, she picked up the topmost kit and handed it to Hayes; then she turned and smiled warmly at the audience.

Hayes held up the kit and described its contents.

"None of the items I've mentioned is a panacea," he concluded, "but each of them will live up to the claims I made for it, and all of them should be in every single household in One Leg To Stand On. The kits sell for two credits apiece. Surely your physical welfare and the welfare of your children are worth that much to you!"

The kits sold surprisingly well, and Moira had to go upstairs twice for more of them. She and Hayes were elated when they retired behind the curtain to round up Bar-rag and get ready for their act. "I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

think we'd better tone it down a little, don't you?" she said, slipping into her Mary Lou dress. "There's a lot of kids out there."

"Good idea," Hayes said. "I'll keep my hands above the waist and leave out the leers, and you can eliminate the wiggles when you walk. Okay?"

"Okay."

Even toned down. *Courtin' Mary Lou* went over big. In fact, the audience begged for an encore. Hayes and Moira gave it to them in the form of one of their abandoned skits. "Why don't you do something for them out of your repertoire?" Moira asked Hayes, when the people continued to linger hopefully about the platform.

"That's one way of getting rid of them, I suppose."

"I didn't mean it that way. Don't you see, Nick? You're as much obligated to elevate them culturally as you are to elevate them physically. You've sold them penicillin. Now sell them another kind of pill. Force it down their throats if they don't want to take it. You owe it to them, Nick. You owe it to yourself!"

He regarded her thoughtfully. It was an angle that hadn't occurred to him, and it just might provide the added something that he needed to round out the image he was trying to create. "All right," he said, "I'll give it a try."

Stepping out on the dock, he explained what had gone before the soliloquy he was about to render and what would take place afterward. Then he raised his arms —

"What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
Sure, He that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and god-like reason
To fust in us unus'd . . . "

As he spoke, the stars stood out ever more vividly above his head, while their light rained down with ever greater intensity upon the upturned faces of his audience. The air was cool, bracing. One of Golden Grain's three moons had climbed into the sky and hung in the heavens like the eye of a camera.

He felt shackles slip from his wrists, fetters fall from his ankles. The "camera" captured his facsimile and started relaying it toward a hundred million living rooms, and he knew the fulfillment of distribution once again. His words climbed into the sky and spread out among the stars in rich and rounded syllables, hung there for all to hear even after he had finished speaking and there was no sound save the susurrus of the meadow grass beneath the feet of his awed and departing audience . . . And he stood there all alone, Nicholas Hayes did, the wind from the forest fresh against the words he had uttered as they sped outward into the immensities.

No, no quite alone. Moira had come out on the deck and was standing beside him, and Bar-rag

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had crept forth from behind the curtain and had curled up at his feet. Hayes was barely aware of either of them. "You were wonderful, Nick," Moira said, "and they knew it, too. They'll never forget, and neither will I."

The spell was broken. "It's getting cold," Hayes said. "Let's go inside."

VI

From *One Leg To Stand On* they hopped to Dutchman's Breeches, and from Dutchman's Breeches they hopped to Devil Take The Hindmost, and from Devil Take The Hindmost they hopped to A Pocket Full Of Rye. The turnout in each instance was excellent, and the same enthusiasm that had been accorded them in One Leg To Stand On was accorded them thrice more. At the close of each performance Hayes rendered his soliloquy, and each time received the same rapt attention and the same symbolic fulfillment.

But symbolic fulfillment was not enough. And he knew it.

From Golden Grain they proceeded to Acre In The Sky, the fifth planet of the blue star Achernar, where they made one-night stands in Potpourri, Sunrise, Venus Looking-Glass, Hereafter, Winding River and Jack Jump Over The Candlestick. Their stand in Jack Jump Over The Candlestick resulted in the accidental publicity which Hayes had gambled on gaining sooner or later. Mahatma McFadden, a leading correspondent for the IBS Special News Service, had come upon the scene to tape a peasant wedding, Acre In The Sky style, but when he heard about the medicine show and learned that none other than Nicholas Hayes was the medicine man, he taped the *Courtin' Mary Lou* performance, too. He also taped the spiel that preceded it and the soliloquy that followed it.

Hayes played his hand shrewdly. "I'm not sure I'd want that much publicity," he said when Mahatma came hurrying back stage, waving a waiver.

"Give me anything, but don't give me that, Mr. Hayes," Mahatma said. "Who ever heard of an actor who didn't want publicity!"

"I'm not an actor any more. I'm a medicine man."

Mahatma guffawed. He was a thin, wiry little man with a hungry face and bright brown eyes. "Medicine smedicine. Once an actor, always an actor, I say. The trouble with you, Mr. Hayes, is you're sore because you got kicked out of the Guild. Sign here, and when they see the tape they may even let you back in. You never can tell."

"Let me back in because I ran away and became a medicine man?" Hayes laughed a laugh with the precise amount of derision in it necessary to lend it a ring of truth. "Even if they would, I wouldn't consider it."

"All right, then. Look at the situation this way, Mr. Hayes. Eventually this tape will wind up in the outplanets and be played in two-bit theatres and barns — provided you sign the waiver, that is. Now, you

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

want these people to know about you, don't you? You want them to look forward to your coming, don't you? Well, believe me, once they see you on tape they *will* look forward, and if they happen to have seen you live already, they'll be all the more eager to see you live again. Publicity never hurt anybody, you know."

"I think he's right, Nick," Moira said

"I know I'm right," Mahatma said.

"H'm'm," Hayes said.

The battle won, Mahatma handed him the waiver and an uncapped jet pen. "Right there where it says 'signature of originator', Mr. Hayes."

Two months later when Hayes and Moira and Bar-rag were touring Green Thumb, the tenth planet of the white star Beta Aurigae, Nancy Oakes, girl reporter for the interstellar magazine Newstar caught up to them in the little town of Lily Of The Valley.

Miss Oakes was asparkle with excitement when she sought Hayes out in the *Dr. Albert Schweitzer* after the performance, and her portable tape-recorder was loaded and ready to go. "Mr. Hayes, you simply *must* let me write you up," she said. "Our readers will simply *devour* your story. Here, let me show you some of the stereophotos I took during your act. They're simply *terrific!*"

Hayes looked them over with carefully disciplined curiosity. One of them showed him peddling medicine kits, with Moira standing beside him in her jaguar skin. Another showed him and Moira on the sofa, with Bar-rag between them. A third showed him standing on the starlit dock in the midst of his soliloquy. It was one of the best pictures he had ever had taken.

He handed the stereophotos back. abruptly Bar-rag materialized on the living-room floor and jumped up on his lap. Miss Oakes gasped. "How in the world did you ever manage to train him like that, Mr. Hayes?"

"It wasn't difficult. He's not an ordinary dog, you see. He's a doggone."

"Really?" Miss Hayes activated the recorder with an unobtrusive flick of her finger. "Tell me what a doggone is, Mr. Hayes. It ought to make simply fascinating copy."

Hayes complied. "And now," Miss Oakes rushed on, "you must fill me in on your past. And Zonda's too, of course. Naturally, I know that you're a guest actor, but I'd like some personal items—things that will tie in with your deciding to become medicine man."

Hayes looked at Moira with feigned helplessness. "Shall we let her do the article?" he asked.

"Of course, Nick."

He faced Miss Oakes again. "Well, I guess we can't fight destiny, can we, Miss Oakes? Start throwing your questions."

The issue with the article in it came out two months later, but two more months passed before the copy which the publisher sent Hayes caught up to him. The article be-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gan on page 14. He looked at the title: *Nicholas Hayes: the Dr. Schweitzer of the Spaceways.* He read the blurb: *How an exiled thespian has triumphed over alcoholism to bring the blessings of civilization to our neighbors in the sky.*

He threw the magazette into the wastebasket.

The next town they played it was Winter's Breath. At the close of the performance Hayes received a message that a certain party wished to see him in her room at the Winter's Breath Hotel. He walked through woods and over fields, beneath stars he no longer saw, then down a winding street and up dilapidated steps into a tired lobby. The room was number 204. He climbed stairs, turned right down a dingy hall. Leslie met him at the door. "Nick, darling, you're looking wonderful."

He went in and sat down on the nearest chair. She took the chair facing it. "I guess you know I've come to take you back," she said.

He raised his eyes. Her eyes were the same. Pale brown, with flecks of summer sunlight in them. Her hair was night-dark as always, sequined with latent stars that even unimaginative lamplight could elicit. Translucent of V-bodice she sat there, gold of abbreviated skirt. Strutting as always her little hour upon the stage. "Why didn't King come after me himself?"

"Because I asked him to send me. An appropriate gesture, don't you think? Imagine, Nick—we'll have cocktails in Laughter in the Afternoon just the way we used to. We'll go to those cute crummy places we used to eat in after shows. We'll—"

"I'm married," Hayes said.

She laughed. "So what? No one stays married any more. It's passe. In Old York, we've adopted the Muslim custom in such matters. You say 'I divorce you' three times and it's all over."

"Is it?"

She leaned forward. "Don't play noble with me, Nick. I can read between the lines when the lines concern you. I'm not Zonda of the Amazon. I'm Leslie of Laughter in the Afternoon. You didn't become a medicine man to help out-planet peoples. You became a medicine man to help yourself—to attract the favorable attention you needed to get yourself back into the good graces of the Teletheatre Guild and back into the good graces of Christopher King. Most of all, you became a medicine man so you could step before the teletheatre camera and be multiplied by one hundred million once again."

Hayes was looking at the floor. "I assume I'm already reinstated in the Guild. Does King have a part for me?"

"I knew you'd see the light, darling. Of course he has a part. He has *the* part — the part of Milton Pomfret. *The Two-sided Triangle* is coming up for Encore next month, and your understudy's contract runs out before that time. So you're all set, Nicholas, dear. I can't say the same for Zonda, of course, since I'm still Mary Lou, besides which I doubt very much if she'd measure

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

up to Chris' standards." Suddenly she giggled. "Tell me, darling, did she *really* swing on a grapevine in the Last Of The Mohicans bar the way it says in the article?"

"Shut up!" Hayes said.

"And that ridiculous little dog with the windmill tail. Where in the world did you find *him*? Honestly, Nick, you're too precious for words!"

Hayes stood up. "You've reserved passage, I suppose."

"On the Great Eastern Express. We rendezvous out of Port-o'-Winds at nine o'clock tomorrow morning. So get a move on, darling. We've very little time."

"I'll be back in an hour," Hayes said, and walked out of the room —

And down the hall and down the stairs and out into the street and down the winding street and through woods and across meadows, more field to where the dark pile of the ship showed against the stars . . .

Moira was waiting up for him. Bar-rag fast asleep on her lap. Her face told him that she already knew. "You've known all along, haven't you?" he said.

"Don't feel bad, Nick. I wanted you to be reinstated, too."

It was late in the day to ask it, but he asked it anyway. "Do *you* feel bad?"

"It doesn't matter. I'm going back to New North Dakota, Mars, where I belong."

"I'll hire a pilot to go with you. It's no good piloting a ship alone. The *Schweitzer* ought to bring more than we paid for it if you can find the right buyer."

"I think I'll hang on to it for a while. There's plenty of room for it at the farm. Will you be on tele-theater soon?"

"Next month. In the Encore of *The Two-Sided Triangle*."

"I'm glad. Bar-rag and I will watch you."

He looked down at the small gray head and the absurd, tatter-demalion ears. He raised his eyes to Moira's slender throat. A faint pulse beat there. He raised his eyes still further and caught the telltale twinkle of the runaway tear.

He stood there, desperately trying to feel. He felt nothing at all except a desire to be gone. "Good-by, Moira," he said, and turned and ran down the spiral stairway and out into the night.

VII

In Old New York it was summer. It was always summer in Old York. He went with Leslie and King to Laughter in the Afternoon and sipped drab coffee while they gaily chatted over cocktails and said Nick this and Nick that, and Oh Nick, how good it is to have you back! He went to *Triangle* to rehearsals and picked up effortlessly where he had left off, and sometimes when he spoke his lines he thought of starry nights on Green Thumb and Acre In The Sky, and cool winds wafting out of virgin woods and breathing upon the little stage.

He was not surprised when he began to drink again. It had been inevitable all along. He drank for the same reason he had drunk before.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

only this time he knew what the reason was. But knowing did not help. What good did it do to know that you were incapable of loving anyone besides yourself if the incapability was incurable?

On Encore night the Teletheatre Bowl overflowed into the square. Encores were traditional, and Old Yorkers treasured traditions, above the common sense that would have reminded them, had they listened, that they had already seen the play at least once, either on its teletheatre debut or in one of the various little theatres it had been playing in during the past year. But they did not listen, and came instead like lemmings to drown in a quasi-cultural sea.

"How does it feel to be in action again, medicine man?" Leslie said, as she and Hayes took their places for the first scene. "How does it feel to know that in a few seconds you'll be multiplied by one hundred million and will no longer be alone?"

He did not answer. Would Moira be watching? he wondered. Would Bar-rag? Abruptly he forgot both girl and doggone as the curtain rose and the cameras swung into place. Seated behind his desk, he said to his wife who had stopped off at the office on this sunny Friday afternoon to check up on him, "As you can see, Glenda, my dear, there are no secretaries sitting on my lap, none hidden in the filing cabinets, and none peering fearfully forth at you from behind the coffee-break bar," and the play was off to a smooth start with Leslie, as the suspicious Glenda, telling him that she had not come to count his amanuenses but to remind him that that night they were dining at the Croftons and to suggest that he skip his usual on-the-road cocktail and get home a little early so that for once they could avoid the usual last-minute confusion occasioned by his trying to shave, shower, and dress all at the same time.

At this point, a striking redhead minced into the office and told Hayes Pomfret that he was wanted in the layout room, whereupon he followed her offstage. Glenda glared after them for a moment, then picked up the phone and put in a call to the face-and-figure specialist and told him what she wanted done, and why. Next, she put in a call to the phoneticist and told *him* what she wanted done, and why.

The following scene showed her as ravishing Mary Lou Johnson, applying for and obtaining a secretarial job in her husband's office. The plot progressed. Hayes Promfret took his new secretary out to lunch. He took her out to dinner. At length he made a date with her and stopped off afterward at her apartment. They sat down side by side on the sofa in her living room. Mary Lou edged closer to him. I'll bet your home was never like this." she said, pouting her lips for the "first" kiss.

"Darling," Hayes Pomfret said, "if home was like this, I'd never budge from the doorstep."

She moved even closer. "Prove it then."

"I will," Hayes Pomfret said, and put his arms around her.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The doorbell rang. "Darn!" Mary Lou said, and got up and left the room.

Her voice could be heard offstage as she argued loudly with a salesman who was trying to sell her a book called *Why You Should Never Trust Your Husband.* To get rid of the man she had to take the stand that all husbands *were* trustworthy and that therefore the book was a big lie. The interruption lasted a little over five minutes, during which time Hayes Pomfret paced back and forth on the stage doing a humorous pantomime of a conscience-stricken husband trying vainly to free himself from the grip of an impatient lover. Upon Mary Lou's return, he resumed his seat on the sofa and she sat back down beside him.

"Darn old salesmen!" she said. "It's getting so people can't have *any* privacy any more!"

Hayes Pomfret started to put his arm around her.

Abruptly she screamed and leaped to her feet.

Hayes stared at the small object that had materialized beside him. He could not move.

The object had hair the hue of of morning mists. Its tatterdemalion ears brought bar-rags to mind, and its glazed, protruding eyes lingered a hint of the gold that had once shone forth in love and adoration. Frozen blood flaked the once-roguish mouth, and the white- tufted tail was silent. The small star in the middle of the forehead shone no more.

He picked the little body up and cradled it in his arms. For a moment, he could not see.

"Shove it under the sofa quick!" Leslie, who had sat back down beside him, whispered. "Get on with your lines!"

Hayes hardly heard her. "Why, Bar-rag?" he said. "Why did you do it? You knew it was a cliff — why did you jump over it? It was forty million miles high, Bar-rag. Forty million miles!"

"Nick, for God's sake!" Leslie said. "Get rid of that horrible thing and get on with your lines!"

Still cradling Bar-rag in his arms, Hayes stood up. The bowl was filled with a vast whispering; ten thousand faces shimmered in the mist before his eyes. He walked away from Leslie. He walked away from himself. He died one hundred million deaths.

In the dressing-room corridor, King caught up to him. "Nick, come back! We can still save the show. Some stagehand pulled a dirty trick — that's all."

Hayes did not pause.

"Nick, you walk out that door, you'll never walk back in it again! I swear."

Hayes kept on walking.

Outside, it wasn't so bad. Outside, he could see Mars. Almost at perigee, it hung like an orange streetlight in the sky. He saw the red plains through his tears. He saw the steepled matchbox of the little church. He saw the rambling ocher hills. His gaze came back and rested on the little body cradled in his arms. Forty million miles, he thought. *Forty million miles!*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The house was a gentle pile of wood and windows in the starlight. Moira met him at the door. "Nick; I hoped, I prayed you'd come!"

"Were you with him when — when he — "

She nodded. "He was sitting at my feet. A second after you said 'darling', he disappeared. At first I didn't understand what had happened. I never dreamed he'd recognize you on teletheatre. Then, several minutes later, he appeared on the screen, and — and I knew."

"I buried him in space," Hayes said. "Out among the stars. He belongs there, Bar-rag does. He was a star himself."

"Come into the living room, Nick. There's something I want to show you."

They walked down the hall. "The ship," Hayes said. "Did you sell it yet?"

"No — it's still at Port-o'-Sands. Mom and Dad just went to bed — shall I wake them so you can say hello?"

"No. I'm going to be here for some time — if you'll put up with me."

In the living room, she knelt beside a small basket that stood by the fireplace. He knelt beside her. He saw the tiny tatterdemalion ears first, then the small mist-gray body and the little white-tufted tail. A pair of slanted golden eyes returned his astonished gaze, and above them on the forehead shone a little star. "Bar-rag!" he gasped.

"I told you they were parthenogenetic. He—she gave birth to him a week before she died."

Hayes tweaked one of the tatterdemalion ears, "Well, what do you know!" he said.

He straightened, and pulled Moira to her feet. Over her shoulder he saw the platinum figurine of Maurice Evans standing on the mantel. Yes, she had sold it all right. Sold it to herself. He looked into her eyes. He would have fallen in love with her long ago if love had not been beyond him. It was beyond him no longer. "We'll begin all over, Moira — if you'll do me the honor of being my leading lady again. We'll restock the ship and we'll go to all the places we didn't get to before. We'll go to Morning Glory and Far Reach and Lode — "

"And Meadow Flower and Forty-Niner and Frontier — "

"And when we complete our circuit, we'll go back to Black Dirt — "

"And go on from there to Golden Grain — "

"And Goshen — "

"And Acre In The Sky . . ."

She was in his arms now, and he was kissing her. In Old York, it was summer. It was always summer in Old York. But in New North Dakota, Mars, it was spring.

END

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DON'T CLIP THE COUPON–

– if you want to keep your copy of **Galaxy** intact for permanent possession!* Why mutilate a good thing? But, by the same token... if you're devotee enough to want to keep your copies in mint condition, you ought to subscribe. You really ought to. For one thing, you get your copies earlier. For another, you're sure you'll get them! Sometimes newsstands run out – the mail never does. (And you can just put your name and address on a plain sheet of paper and mail it to us, at the address below. We'll know what you mean... provided you enclose your check!)

In the past few years **Galaxy** has published the finest stories by the finest writers in the field – Bester, Heinlein, Pohl, Asimov, Sturgeon, Leiber and nearly everyone else.

In the next few years it will go right on, with stories that are just as good... **or better.**

Don't miss any issue of **Galaxy.** You can make sure you won't. Just subcribe today.

*(If, on the other hand, your habit is to read them once and go on to something new – please – feel free to use the coupon! It's for your convenience, not ours.)

GALAXY Publishing Corp., 421 Hudson Street, New York 14, N. Y. (50c additional per 6 issues foreign postage)

Enter my subscription for the New Giant 196-page Galaxy (U. S. Edition only) for:

6 Issues @ $2.50 ..... 12 Issues @ $4.50 ..... 24 Issues @ $8.50 .....

Name..... City.....

Address..... Zone..... State.....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Know all the truth about people! Now hidden secrets can be uncovered by Graphoanalysis (scientific handwriting analysis)

MODERN psychology shows you the way to use Graphoanalysis* to "read between the lines" and see people as they really are—with their masks off.

Learn how to identify character and personality traits from letters, notes, signatures and any other handwritten material.

Graphoanalysis is now being widely used by *employment agencies and personnel departments* to get "behind" the formal applications. Clergymen and teachers are finding Graphoanalysis valuable for gaining a deeper insight into people for more effective counseling.

Lawyers and law enforcement officials analyze handwritten messages to find out things the messages do not say—or intentionally try to conceal.

Credit departments are now more successful in *weeding out bad credit risks before trouble starts.* And when accounts later turn into problems the credit manager knows better how to handle the people involved after he studies the handwriting.

Personal and individual uses of Graphoanalysis are for some people of greatest importance. Newly marrieds learn to adjust by understanding each other more clearly. Parents find Graphoanalysis invaluable in helping them understand and guide their children. And many intelligent people, with or without problems, Graphoanalyze their own handwriting in order to see themselves objectively.

Maybe you have never heard of Graphoanalysis as it is a relatively new psychological technique. So it should be explained that Graphoanalysis is **not** occult graphology and has nothing at all to do with fortune-telling. It is a rapidly growing scientific procedure, already proved and tested.

Its growth during the past few years has been spectacular, even exceeding the growth of other forms of psychological testing, which have been amazing. Graphoanalysis has been written up in *Newsweek, Business Week,* American Management Association's *Personnel, Insiders' Newsletter, Insurance Salesman, London (England) Telegraph,* and other highly regarded publications.

Even the full CBS-TV network gave time to a serious explanation of Graphoanalysis, its scientific background and its many uses in business and the professions.

What does all this mean to you?

First of all here is your chance to acquire a specialized knowledge that will help you personally in a hundred different ways. Secondly, you can almost certainly use the techniques of Graphoanalysis to advance yourself in your present occupation.

More and more men and women are becoming professional Graphoanalysts. There are great opportunities for you in this area, if you have what it takes to be your own boss. Let us send you free information.

Without any obligation to you we would like to mail you details of Graphoanalysis, how you can learn it and how you can use it. No salesman will get in touch with you—we respect your privacy.

Simply mail the coupon below or send a note asking for the free details about Graphoanalysis. Information will be mailed to you at once, without charge.

This could be a turning point in your life . . . mail your request today. International Graphoanalysis Society, 325 W. Jackson Blvd., Dept. AX-150 Chicago 6, Ill.

FREE DETAILS—MAIL THIS COUPON

International Graphoanalysis Society
325 W. Jackson Blvd., Dept. AX-150
Chicago 6, Ill.

Please mail me information about Graphoanalysis, without any cost or obligation on my part.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY & STATE

*Graphoanalysis is a trademark and service mark of IGAS, Inc.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED